

TRULY MADLY DEEPLY

LEVEL ZERO TO HERO



A CAMPAIGN FOR YOUNG PLAYERS FOCUSED ON
CHARACTER CREATION THROUGH ROLE-PLAYING

BY

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PATRICK HIGINGBOTHAM

SGDDTMDF



Truly Madly Deeply is a mini-campaign arc for 4 players with characters from 0 through 3rd level. It is designed to teach players, especially young ones, who know little to nothing about RPGs and it begins with character creation through role-playing. If you and your players are familiar with D&D already, feel free to skip Module 0 and go straight to "Fight Club" in Module 1.

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ON THE COVER



"Guild Hall" by Henrik Karppinen captures the spirit of *Truly Madly Deeply* as the Harper's Hall where the characters will receive most of their training.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CHAD CRAY

Found on the doorsteps of a monastery, Chad now uses his monk training to make his RPG adventures almost too realistic. But for him, that's just part of being legit. Too legit to quit.

PATRICK HIGINGBOTHAM

Patrick began playing RPGs around 1994 when his brother introduced him to AD&D and Cyberpunk 2020. Raised on a steady diet of jalapeños, MTV, 80s action, sci-fi, and horror movies, his gut has been wrenching for nearly 40 years. He lives in North Georgia with his family and way too many books.

MODULE 0

Character creation
through role-playing



TRULY MADLY DEEPLY

The purpose of this module is to introduce a new player, or players, and a Dungeon Master (DM), to the process of creating a D&D 5th edition character. Established adventuring parties can skip to Module 1. In this module, we'll build up each character through role-playing, storytelling, and the use of targeted questions by the DM. At the end of this module, each player will have a level 1 character that's ready to play.

Please note that the intent of this module is not to explain how to create a character or fill in the character sheet. That information is thoroughly covered in the *Player's Handbook* and you will need to complete the character sheets prior to starting module 1. Instead, this is to help young and/or new players flesh out their characters through role-playing. This serves as an introduction to role-playing and sets the stage for the following modules.

MODULE 0: CHARACTER CREATION THROUGH ROLE-PLAYING

"THE ESSENCE OF A ROLE-PLAYING GAME IS THAT IT IS A GROUP, COOPERATIVE EXPERIENCE."

—Gary Gygax, *The New York Times*

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY:

- Dice (1 20-sided, 1 12-sided, 2 10-sided, 1 8-sided, 1 6-sided, and 1 4-sided)
- Paper and pencil
- [D&D 5E Player's Handbook](#)
- [D&D 5E Character Sheet](#) (zip file Wizards.com)

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

In this document, you will find a lot of background information. The goal is to give you enough information to improvise with your players. In some cases, you should read the background information to the PCs. In other cases, you should summarize it as per your needs. This allows you to customize this module for your players or shorten it for their attention spans. As your skill as a storyteller grows, you'll find yourself paraphrasing and improvising a lot more.

DM NOTE

Text that should not be read to the players and is intended for the DM only will follow a DM Note heading.

However, there will be cases where some text **SHOULD** be read to the players. This is usually descriptive text that sets up a scenario, or dialog from a non-player character (NPC). Most often it will be in a box like the one below.

With this box, you'd most likely want to read the entire text to the players. For a richer experience you could adopt a menacing or a funny voice for either role. It may feel silly at first. Just do whatever is fun and comfortable.

The evil drow elf, in broken common, says, "all your base are belong to us!"

To which the brawny brawler responds, "All my fist are belong to your face!"

Of course, as the DM, you do not have to read this text and can improvise as you see fit. But it's usually a good idea to share the text with your players.

DUNGEON MASTER INFORMATION

While filling the role of DM, you have three objectives: make the game fun for all your players, teach new players, and move the story along. As the DM, it is up to you to set the tone of your game, establish the group standards of play, and interpret the rules. Yes, this means that you are the god of your game universe. But it is important to remember your first objective: make the game fun!

Rules are good, but an exciting adventure is even better. Feel free to change this module, adjust the rules, and ignore dice results. The key is to do these things sparingly and whenever it contributes to the players' enjoyment, increases the suspense, or moves the story forward. It is a balancing game that all DMs play between being too arbitrary and too rules-bound. Whenever you make a decision or interpret a die roll, ask this question: which outcome will make this game more entertaining for my players?

There are a few things you, as the DM, can do to keep your game progressing. First, say "yes" or "yes but..." when your players ask to do something creative. This is a game of imagination and virtually anything is possible, which is what makes it so great. A "no" can shut this down very quickly. Second, make sure your adventure is well-balanced and considers your players and not just their characters. You want to challenge them, not destroy them or—even worse—bore them. Third, keep each character engaged in the action. Some players might be more timid than others; it is up to you to draw them out and ensure they're immersed in the story your group is creating.

STARTING CONDITIONS

Each player should have a character sheet. A character sheet template can be found in the back of the *Player's Handbook* (PHB). There are many online as well. We've linked to the official ones from Wizards of the under "What You Need to Play" earlier in this module. As the DM, you can limit your players' list of available races and/or alignments. For this module, it is recommended that all players should be one of the three good alignments.

As this module progresses, each player will flesh out the details of their character as they introduce themselves to the rest of their party. Before diving into this, discuss with each player what race they chose and what interests them about that race. It is fun to create a sense of personality, perhaps having player characters (PCs) practice communicating to each other in character, or as his/her character would.

Once the character sheets are completed, you are ready to begin the encounter described in the last section. This encounter is based on a party of four players, but you can adjust the difficulty level for whoever is in the party. The overall time for this module is around 2 hours but will take more time for larger players.

WHAT IF A CHARACTER DIES?

The premise of this module is that your players are brand new adventurers. In fact, they are so new that they don't even have a class, or skills, or weapons yet. As they progress through the module, they will gain these and become real adventurers. With that in mind, while students are still learning and haven't graduated yet, the standard rules of death described in the PHB are suspended. The worst that can happen for the students is that they are knocked unconscious and might not pass the challenge described in the module. That doesn't mean they failed! Defeat can mean excellent storycrafting for a later session. Perhaps the kobold runs away after narrowly defeating the party and will return with friends later, giving the PCs a chance for revenge. After a short rest, students are returned to full health and ready to continue their lessons.

MILESTONE

Upon completing this module, each player will have a completed character sheet and a level 1 adventurer who is ready for action. After the encounter described below is complete, each character will be considered a full student of **The Order of Shaundakul**.

SITTING AROUND THE CAMPFIRE (ALSO KNOWN AS DM BACKSTORY)

Scornubel is a city located in the **Western Heartlands** of **Faerûn**. It is only noteworthy because of its location north of the **River Chionthar** where it meets the Trade Way. Sitting at the intersection of these two important trade routes, the city is also known as the **Caravan City**. Each summer the population of this small city swells nearly to the point of bursting with travelers representing virtually every race and nationality found on Faerûn.

In counterpoint to the bustling **Scornubel**, the small village of **Aberuthven** sits quietly three days of hard walking to the southwest of the **Caravan City**. In many respects, this little village is just like hundreds of other similar villages scattered throughout the countryside with one exception. A small keep a half-day's walk from the edge of town receives a surprising number of visitors that enter from the northeast and leave several months later heading southeast towards **Berdusk**, a legendary base of operations for the Harpers.

The Harpers are the worst kept secret on **Faerûn** and are widely known for their dedication to doing good and helping wrest power from those who misuse it. In general, the population of **Faerûn** loves the Harpers, but only in the abstract sense for membership is a closely guarded secret. But like all large organizations, recruiting new members is always difficult and is always compounded when membership is shrouded in secrecy.

To bolster their membership, the Harpers have established a small keep outside of **Aberuthven** to recruit new members. Due to the proximity of the **Caravan City**, the Harpers can find young, promising recruits of virtually any race. These new recruits, however, all have two things in common. First, they share a good alignment and a drive to help their fellows. Second, they carry an offer to join the **School of Husbandry and Advanced Farming Techniques** (or **SHAFT** as it is called by the locals) which is located on the outskirts of **Aberuthven**.

The **School of Husbandry and Advanced Farming Techniques** is easy to find based on its locations and the huge sign out front with its name emblazoned across it. Observant locals have noted (on more than one occasion) that for a school of animal husbandry and farming, there is a surprising dearth of animals, crops, or anything agrarian, as well as an equally confusing number of rough-looking transients fairly bristling with swords. Thankfully for the school, all the villagers sport a small harp pin in some form or fashion and more than a few of these "villagers" just happen to be adjunct instructors at the school.

For those lucky few invited to the school, it has a very different name only mentioned while in the confines of the keep. The initiates know the school to be a facade for the **Harper's Order of Shaundakul**. Belonging to this order does not require worshipping Shaundakul, the god of exploration, caravans, and travelers. But that is a bonus. The **Order of Shaundakul**, as it turns out, trains young travelers to become wandering adventurers who act as the eyes and ears of the Harpers. Upon graduation from the school, members make their way in secret to the Harper guild hall in **Berdusk** and take their oaths in the presence of one of the seven High Harpers.

LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN!

This is where the role-playing begins. It is advised that you have read through the entire module before beginning the adventure. This will help you answer any questions that your players may pose to you without slowing the game play down to read through the details.

DAY 1—ALL ABOUT THAT CLASS

Adoward "the Baker" Axeager is returning from **Scornubel** with four new students. With his large laugh, avuncular concern, and good-natured approach to life, his students are pleasantly surprised. They were expecting to find an imposing, taciturn dwarf, but found themselves in the company of a portly fellow who was enjoying his retirement. The more observant students might have noticed the hammer swinging from his belt and its rough surface that can only be acquired through hard use. Other students might have noticed the calloused knuckles on his hands or how thick and swollen his ears were. Strange details for a baker.

DM NOTE

After reading the text above and pointing to one of the players, encourage each person to state their character's name and then describe them. The goal is to get their Character Name, Race, and Alignment at a minimum. These aspects need to be recorded on their character sheets. Characters could state that they are dwarven, or maybe they describe their long beard, short stature, and love of gems and then let the other players guess at their ancestry. While you, as the DM, will need to know their exact race, there may be some cases when the other characters might not need to know this. For example, a half-elf in your party might be trying to pass themselves off as a full-elf or full-human.

This is a good time to record on each player's character sheet their racial traits. This typically includes things like Size, Speed, Vision, Languages, Subrace, Ability Score Modifiers, and other abilities as noted in the PHB.

Had the students known Adoward Axeager and his exploits, they would have slept like babes-in-arms on their three-day trek to **Aberuthven** knowing that his battered hammer had crushed the central eye of a beholder. If they knew his commanding voice alone could repulse all the undead for miles around there would have been far fewer furtive glances into the dark as the students prepared for camp. Then again, had they known any of this, it's unlikely the students would open up to Adoward, making his current task much more difficult.

After more than three centuries of tough living, Adoward enjoyed his annual trek to **Scornubel** and his time on the road with the students. This gave him an opportunity to confirm his impression of each student and determine if they were truly fit to join the Harpers. It also gave him time to discuss with the students their goals and dreams to see which path would suit them the best.

As the first night comes to an end, Adoward asks each of the students probing questions about their travels, any fights or disputes they might have been in, and what they would like to accomplish after graduation. On the first night, he's careful to avoid discussions that are too personal or delve too deeply into their past. Things can get more personal on the second night when they are more comfortable sharing these details.

DM NOTE

At this point you'll need to role-play with your group. Use the information presented above to set the scene for your players. Describe to them the campfire, Adoward Axeager, and lead them into some conversations. These conversations should be between the characters and Adoward Axeager, and not the players themselves.

As Adoward and crew exit the town, he turns to the students and says, "no reason to be shy! Over the next year, you'll get to know each other better than your own mothers." Then, pointing at a student, he says, "you there! Tell us your name at least."

The goal for these conversations is to identify which class each player would like their character to be. First, determine if each player is more interested in a martial or magical character. Would they prefer to conquer evil by stabbing it or from a distance with magic missiles? When they were back home and attempting to catch the eye of the local dairy maid or farm boy, did they do it through feats of strength or through prestidigitation and sleight of hand?

Below are some defining characteristics for each class. As each player discusses their character, see if you can match it up with the classes listed here:

MARTIAL

- **Barbarian**—Does the character come from a wild and uncivilized background? Does he/she have a hot temper? Have they ever entered an uncontrollable rage?
- **Fighter**—Has the character been training with weapons since childhood? Would they consider themselves a professional fighter? Do they want to master as many weapons as possible?
- **Monk**—Does the character eschew most weapons and rely primarily on their own body for defense? Are they comfortable spending hours in meditation honing their will?
- **Paladin**—Are they deeply religious and willing to fight for their god? Are they eager to take an oath of service to their deity?
- **Ranger**—Did the character grow up spending as much time as possible in the wild, hunting and tracking animals? Would he/she prefer to handle encounters from a distance with a bow? How does the character feel about having an animal companion?
- **Rogue**—Does the character scorn those who are muscle-bound and prefer to use fast thinking and trickery to defeat his/her enemies? Does the idea of picking locks, removing traps, and hiding in the shadows excite the character?

MAGICAL

- **Bard**—Does the character play any instruments? Does he/she have a desire to inspire his/her teammates with music? Is he/she a natural-born performer?
- **Cleric**—Is the character interested in representing his/her deity daily? Does he/she want to provide healing support to his/her teammates while simultaneously using his/her deity's power to smite their foes?

- **Druid**—Does the character have a deep connection to nature? Can he/she conceive of taking animal form? Is the character willing to use nature's destructive and healing powers?
- **Sorcerer**—Has the character experienced any strange manifestations of magic? Does he/she have an innate magical gift that they are trying to learn about and master?
- **Warlock**—Through extraordinary circumstances, has the character made a pact with an entity they don't fully understand? Have they been contacted by an extraplanar being? Has contact with this being led to some magical powers he/she wants to learn more about?
- **Wizard**—Does the character love to study and feel a deep need to understand everything around him/her? Has this learning taken him/her into the realm of the mystical? Has he/she encountered a magic scroll or book and learned a spell or two from them? Does he/she wish to learn as much about magic as possible?

After role-playing with the players, it should be apparent which class each character is. Make sure to note this on each character sheet and don't forget to update the sheet with specific class information. This includes feats, specializations, class features, proficiencies, hit points, hit dice, and proficiency bonus.

Each class description in the PHB provides details that need to be entered onto the character sheet. Updating character sheets with class information will take the most amount of time for this module, but the result will be characters that are almost ready to play!

DAY 2—I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER

After a long, arduous day of hiking cross-country, Adoward Axeager calls the travel party to a halt. The travelers go about setting up camp while Adoward scouts the surrounding area to make sure their camp will remain undisturbed. On his way back to the camp, he collects fallen branches that will be used to start their small campfire.

As you clean your gear and prepare the evening meal, Adoward asks you all, "what do you want to do when you grow up? If you devote yourselves to the Harpers for the next five years, you'll be able to do anything you want! Believe me, after the spitting in the eye of a Beholder—literally, mind you—negotiating grain prices for flour is a piece of cake!"

Much later that evening, sitting around the campfire, Adoward encourages each person to share their story with their newfound friends. Given that each person around the campfire is about to share in some grueling training and adventuring, it is time for them to take that first trust-building step and talk about their backgrounds.

DM NOTE

As with Day 1, encourage each player to share a few things about their character. Specifically, they should talk about their characters overall background, ideals, bonds, and flaws. Basically, finish the character creation process through role-playing and discussion between characters about what they did last summer.

This is where you, as the DM, can encourage your players to be as creative as they want to be. These are their characters, and the more they put into their creation, the more enjoyment they will get from role-playing. *The Player's Handbook* has a good section on backgrounds beginning on page 125. Each background includes a list of ideals, bonds, and flaws that can be used straight out of the book or modified to fit each player's character.

But remember your three objectives and don't let the rules bog down the game play. If a player creates a background that isn't in line with what is printed, that is to everyone's advantage. Creativity and originality should be encouraged, not stifled. The only thing you may consider turning a player away from would be a background that is evil. Unless your player can convince you that it is part of what drives his/her character today. Escaping a past and trying to atone for previous sins may be a strong motivator. Since the characters will become members of the Harpers, a good organization, neutral or evil alignments will cause complications for you.

At this point, each player should have a nearly complete character sheet. Equipment and spells can be chosen later to save time; but each player should have at least one weapon or spell before starting Day 3.

DAY 3—THIS IS WAR, NOT AGRICULTURE

Early on the third day of travel, the party sees two despondent farmers gesticulating and looking westward. From a short distance, it looks as if they are having a heated argument. Leaving his traveling party behind, Adoward approaches the farmers. A short while later Adoward motions for his companions to join them.

Upon closer examination, it appears to be an elderly human couple. Adoward makes the introductions to his companions and then explains in his even-handed and jovial manner that this poor couple is being harassed by a particularly odiferous wolf. They fled their house as the wolf entered it and proceeded to ransack the kitchen. As they hurried out of the house they could see the wolf pulling food right out of the cupboards! Which seemed a little odd to Adoward..

Turning to his party, Adoward asks if they are up for a slight detour while they help this couple set things to right in their house.

DM NOTE

This is a good place to get the players involved. What do they want to do? If they want to help, do they go straight to the house? Or do they come up with a plan before proceeding? Assuming they decide to help the elderly couple, the Encounter described below takes place as they approach the farmhouse.

ENCOUNTER—WOLVES GONE WILD

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 0 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: NONE

MODULE AWARDS: NONE

ENCOUNTER NOTES

This encounter is unique in that it will mostly be role-playing with minimal rules and dice. The idea is to let the players have some fun with their characters and get into the shared story aspect of D&D. Other modules will get into the mechanics of the game, but for now, players are learning the most important part of the entire game: role-playing.

As the DM, you will describe the setting and encounter to the players and ask them to each take an action. You can pick the order or have them roll 1d20 and go in descending order. The enemy will go last. Players can move and take an action before passing their turn on to the next player. For example, one character might move up close to the farmhouse and look through the window. Another character might attack with his sword while another casts magic missile. If the actions are in keeping with their character class and equipment, go along with it.

To determine if any spell or attack hits the enemy, have each player roll 1d20. On a roll of 12 or higher they hit, or their action succeeds. A roll of 1 is a fumble and you can get creative with what happens (e.g., they trip and fall in a puddle of mud). Conversely, a roll of 20 succeeds even better than the players would expect (e.g., the arrow enters the enemy's eye and kills it instantly).

If players try something particularly difficult, like trying to shoot the enemy's dagger out of its hand while it is hiding in a dark cellar increase the number needed to make a successful hit. In this example, the "to hit" number might be 18 to indicate how difficult it is. Similarly, if the action is very easy, reduce the target number.

On the enemy's turn, you must roll a 15 or higher to hit the characters with a small club or to bite them. This target number can be modified to make it easier or harder based on the circumstances. If either the enemy or a character is hit twice, it is knocked unconscious.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

Adoward tells the farmers that they are in luck, his companions are ready to clear their house of any unwanted guests, wolf or otherwise. The farmers point out to Adoward

the direction of their house and then take a seat on a fallen log. They are more than happy to wait this problem out. Adoward tells the students to go check out the farmhouse while he stands guard in case more wolves come sniffing around.

As the party nears the farmhouse, they notice that the house is in a shambles and they hear quite the ruckus coming from the back of the house. The observant student might notice at this point that the door is wide open as are the cupboards. This would be quite a feat for a wolf to pull off.

If the students go behind the house, they will notice a door set into the ground next to a small, ramshackle granary. The double doors have been thrown wide open and dirt steps can be seen going down into the darkness. Within this cold, dark environment the farmers would have stored cured meat, ale, and wine. And now something very noisy and rancid was destroying the supplies that the elderly couple had set aside for the coming winter.

DM NOTE

This is where the role-playing will begin. Do any of the students rush down into the cellar in a show of bravado? Do they consult one another for a plan to draw out the wolf? Once again, encourage them to do what their characters would do and not necessarily what they would do in "real life". Whether they enter the cellar or draw out the creature within, they will soon discover that what was called a wolf is really no wolf at all. Instead what was in the cellar is a **kobold**. The D&D 5E *Monster Manual* (not required for this module) describes **kobolds** as "craven reptilian humanoids that worship evil dragons as demigods and serve them as minions and toadies. Kobolds inhabit dragons' lairs when they can but more commonly infest dungeons, gathering treasures and trinkets to add to their tiny hoards."

When the characters can see the **kobold**, all you need to do is describe how it looks, what it's wearing, and what it's doing. All of those are your call. If you want your **kobold** to look more canine and have fur, go for it. Is he shocked to see people closing in on him? Defensive? Aggressive? Again, it's up to you. Since your players are new to the game you shouldn't necessarily rush off to give the names of the creatures they encounter except for typical things like dragons or giants or anything else the average person may instantly recognize. In later modules you may wish to allow characters to roll to see if they have an idea of what they're facing. But more on that another time.

For now, here are a couple of scenarios:

Bad DMing: So, you go into the cellar and it's not a wolf. It's a kobold...it's a craven reptilian humanoid that worships evil dragons. What do you do now?

Better DMing: As you sneak down the cellar stairs, being careful not to make a sound, you notice the smell worsening and it isn't coming from spoiled meat. This is from something alive and incredibly offensive. Once you hit the landing you see the source of the stench. It is not a wolf. What you see is some sort of reptilian creature rummaging through the shelves. You notice it stands on two feet and has spiny horns on the top of its head. A crude-looking dagger is tucked into its belt. You have never seen anything like, this but you know instantly that it is no wolf. Nor is it any other wild beast of the **Western Heartlands**. Suddenly the creature's head tilts and it whirls around in an instant. You hardly notice that its dagger is now in its hand as it stares at you with a hatred that you have never seen in any beast.

ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

In most encounters, the players will get experience points (XP), treasure, or some type of award. Since this module is more about role-playing and character creation, the players don't receive anything for this module. However, regardless of the outcome, they should all have fully-developed characters, completed character sheets, and some fun along the way. They are now ready for Module 1.

MODULE 1

Fight Club



WHAT IF A CHARACTER DIES?

The premise of this module is that your players are brand new adventurers. In fact, they are so new that they don't even have a class, or skills, or weapons yet. As they progress through the module, they will gain these and become real adventurers. With that in mind, while students are still learning and haven't graduated yet, the standard rules of death described in the PHB are suspended. The worst that can happen for the students is that they are knocked unconscious and might not pass the challenge described in the module. That doesn't mean they failed! Defeat can mean excellent storycrafting for a later session. Perhaps the kobold runs away after narrowly defeating the party and will return with friends later, giving the PCs a chance for revenge. After a short rest, students are returned to full health and ready to continue their lessons.

MILESTONE

Upon completing this module, each character will be considered a graduate of The Harper's **Order of Shaundakul** although they will be at a very low level within the order. This means that characters can get renown (similar to experience points) when they complete tasks or advance the goals of Shaundakul or the Harpers (described more in the background section below). Starting out, characters who graduate will be Watchers and have one point of renown within the Harper organization. Subsequent modules will take your party on adventures that will reward characters with experience points, renown, and loot.

Renown	Rank	Minimum Level
1	Watcher	1
3	Harpshadow	5
10	Brightcandle	10
25	Wise Owl	15
50	High Harper	20

SITTING AROUND THE CAMPFIRE (ALSO KNOWN AS DM BACKSTORY)

DM NOTE

Skip this section if you ran Module 0 on the next page.

Scornubel is a city located in the **Western Heartlands** of **Faerûn**. It is only noteworthy because of its location north of the **River Chionthar** where it meets the Trade Way. Sitting at the intersection of these two important trade routes, the city is also known as the **Caravan City**. Each summer the population of this small city swells nearly to the point of bursting with travelers representing virtually every race and nationality found on Faerûn.

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To bolster their membership, the Harpers have established a small keep outside of **Aberuthven** to recruit new members. Due to the proximity of the **Caravan City**, the Harpers can find young, promising recruits of virtually any race. These new recruits, however, all have two things in common. First, they share a good alignment and a drive to help their fellows. Second, they carry an offer to join the **School of Husbandry and Advanced Farming Techniques** (or **SHAFT** as it is called by the locals) which is located on the outskirts of Aberuthven.

The **School of Husbandry and Advanced Farming Techniques** is easy to find based on its locations and the huge sign out front with its name emblazoned across it. Observant locals have noted (on more than one occasion) that for a school of animal husbandry and farming, there is a surprising dearth of animals, crops, or anything agrarian, as well as an equally confusing number of rough-looking transients fairly bristling with swords. Thankfully for the school, all the villagers sport a small harp pin in some form or fashion and more than a few of these "villagers" just happen to be adjunct instructors at the school.

For those lucky few invited to the school, it has a very different name only mentioned while in the confines of the keep. The initiates know the school to be a facade for the **Harper's Order of Shaundakul**. Belonging to this order does not require worshipping Shaundakul, the god of exploration, caravans, and travelers. But that is a bonus. The **Order of Shaundakul**, as it turns out, trains young travelers to become wandering adventurers who act as the eyes and ears of the Harpers. Upon graduation from the school, members make their way in secret to the Harper guild hall in Berdusk and take their oaths in the presence of one of the seven High Harpers.

BEGIN MODULE 1

ENCOUNTER—THE HAIRY POTTER'S GOBLET OF PHOENIX BLOOD

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 1 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: NONE

MODULE AWARDS: NONE

EXPERIENCE: 100 XP FOR THE WINNER, 50 XP FOR ALL OTHERS

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

After a fitful night of sleep, the students are woken by Adoward and told to prepare for their first contest of skill and cunning. For this contest, they won't need any equipment as it will be a simple foot race. Well, mostly simple...

Adoward leads the students about an hour outside of the school to a small thicket of woods covering a low hill. Standing about three hundred feet below the hilltop, is a wizened, old gnome. Adoward introduces the students to the gnome and explains that this foot race will be judged by his fellow instructor, Belamros Cruorin.

Belamros Cruorin, the Potter, is a wizard renowned for three things: his rumored ability to stop time, his scraggly beard that makes him look perpetually homeless, and his love of pottery. Tragically, his love of pottery has not translated into a knack for creating it. Despite his constant attempts, his clay creations have the aesthetic appeal of a wagon fire. While some of his pottery is pressed into service as bedpans, most of them are simply too large or too ugly to keep around a sensible person's house.

Handing each student one of his homemade goblets, filled to the brim with a thick, viscous red fluid, Belamros explains the rules of the race to the students. In principle, it is very simple. The first student to the top of the hill with the most liquid in his or her goblet will be declared the winner. And the rest must drink the Phoenix blood (really just sheep blood) left in their goblet.

During the race, students are encouraged to trip, shove, pull, and otherwise harass each other. Magical cantrips can be used, but no weapons or offensive spells of any kind. Belamros makes it very clear that cheaters will be disqualified from the race and possibly expelled from the school.

DM NOTE

The goal of this encounter is for students to race each other to the end of the map without spilling the contents of their goblet. Encourage players to think creatively. For instance, a character could hold the contents of the goblet in his/her mouth until he/she crosses the finish line, and then spit it back out into the goblet.

Track the level of fluid in each cup. As the characters make daring maneuvers, or are tripped by other characters, their fluid level should drop. You could keep it simple and have goblets that are empty, half-full, and full. Or you could measure the fluid in inches (i.e., each goblet holds 6 inches of fluid) and deduct inches based on the events as they play out. As the DM, it is up to you to establish these rules with the players ahead of time, and adjust it based on their age and what would be the most entertaining for your group.

The map presented above can be enlarged and printed out or used in online tools like Roll20.net. Each square is 5 feet, trees are impassible terrain, the water is rough terrain, and the wall requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to jump or climb over. There are two stone paths that allow characters to move across the water and avoid the rough terrain movement penalties. However, the rocks are slippery and should require a a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to make it across safely. Characters start on the left side of the map, and the goal is to cross the blue line on the right side.

The purpose of this encounter is to teach players about movement, and some basic combat options. Opportunity attacks, running, and standing up will be some of the more common actions taken during this encounter. You may want to go over these actions with your players before starting the encounter.

Players should treat other characters as enemies for the purpose of this encounter. Characters are encouraged to grapple, shove (i.e., melee attack with no damage but knocks the defender prone or pushes them away), push (i.e., melee attack with no damage but moves the defender 10 feet), dodge, disengage, dash, and make ready. Cantrips can be used unless they cause damage. For example, a sorcerer could use *Mage Hand* to trip another player, but not *Acid Splash*.



ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

Once a winner is declared, award that player 100 XP and all other players get 50 XP. Continue on to the next encounter.

ENCOUNTER—THE LIME-GREEN ARROW

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 1 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: NONE

MODULE AWARDS: NONE

EXPERIENCE: 100 XP FOR THE WINNER, 50 XP FOR ALL OTHERS

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

It has been four grueling weeks since the foot race. During this time, the students have been beaten, bruised, enspelled, and harangued by Adoward Axeager and Belamros Cruorin. For the students, this has been a muscle-building, soul-crushing experience as they hone their combat skills against the two veteran instructors. The students have shown their determination by sticking with the training despite their rather large and comprehensive collection of bruises.

Over the last four days, Lucleia Vabrameia has been attempting to teach the students how to shoot an arrow without putting their own eyes out. Lucleia is definitely the most junior instructor, with only thirty-one years of adventuring experience, but for a human she has lived a long, full life. And it is a complete mystery to most why she spends her twilight years trying to impart her near-magical gift with a bow and arrow to the younger generations.

Despite her best attempts, the students are still struggling to master the short bows they have been training with. While they can hit their targets with a reasonable amount of success, their ability to incorporate it into combat has been dismal at best. In an attempt to teach the students how to apply their newfound skills, she has devised a clever contest.

Lucleia hands each student a quiver with 15 arrows in it. Pulling out one arrow, she shows them the lime-green tip, which looks like a tight sack of lead powder. It is obvious that these arrows won't injure their target, but they will induce nauseating pain in anyone unlucky enough to be hit by it. Waving the arrow in front of the students, Lucleia explains that being touched by the arrow has two effects above and beyond its ability to leave a lasting bruise. First, it will leave a lime-green mark on the target that will slowly fade over the course of ten days. Second, the target will receive a small shock. Small, of course, being a relative term that means small enough to completely incapacitate the target but not large enough to cause permanent damage. In other words, any student hit with the arrow will be left with a silly mark and sent into convulsions for a brief period of time.

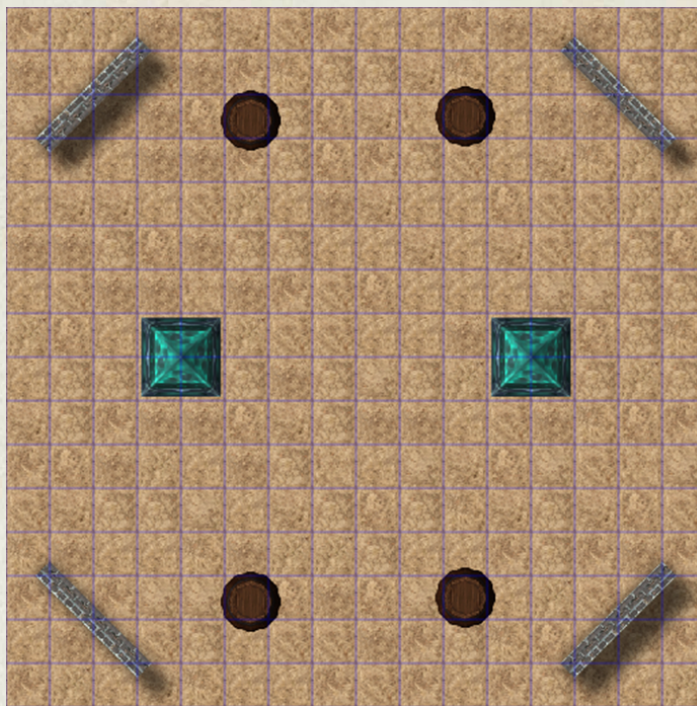
After this short explanation, Lucleia leads the students into a practice pit that has been setup for a unique game of target practice. Lucleia explains to the students that they will each be given a short bow (in addition to their quiver of arrows) and the last student left standing will be the victor.

DM NOTE

The map below is 80 feet on each side (5 feet per square), which is the maximum normal range for a short bow. The blue pillars provide full cover, walls provide $\frac{3}{4}$ cover, and barrels provide $\frac{1}{2}$ cover (see PHB, page 196 for more details on cover). The students start this encounter behind one of the walls.

The goal for this encounter is to teach players how to use ranged weapons and the usefulness of taking cover behind objects. Players should also become familiar with the Dodge action and be aware that using ranged attacks when enemies are within 5 ft leaves them at a disadvantage (see PHB, page 195 for more details on ranged attacks).

Creative students who lack any skill with ranged weapons might find alternate approaches to winning the game. They might get into melee range and attempt to touch their target with an arrow. Or they could throw all 15 arrows at once at a nearby opponent in the hopes that they will be touched by an arrow head. Fun and interesting ways of accomplishing the objectives should be encouraged.



ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

Once a winner is declared, award that player 100 XP and all other players get 50 XP. Continue on to the next encounter.

ENCOUNTER—BATTLE TOAD

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 1 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: 1 HARPER PIN PER STUDENT

**MODULE AWARDS: 1 RENOWN WITH THE
HARPERS AND ELEVATION TO WATCHER
RANK**

EXPERIENCE: 200 XP EACH

DM NOTE

The following text is a bit long to read aloud. You may want to paraphrase just key parts you think will resonate most with your players.

Belamros looks each student over and strokes his beard thoughtfully. The students meet his gaze with a level of confidence they were lacking a mere six months ago. Adoward moves into his standard teaching spot directly in front of the students while they stand in a short, evenly spaced line displaying a level of discipline and familiarity that has recently surfaced. It's clear that the rigorous training has had a major impact on each student.

Clearing his throat, Adoward glares at the line of students in front of him and says, "This is it. One more test before you graduate. You have ten minutes to grab your equipment, and then we'll take a short walk to the pond." This is followed by a low groan from the students because they know the pond is a grueling four-hour hike away that will leave them exhausted.

Four hours and ten minutes later, the students arrive at the pond and are allowed to take a knee and catch their breath. As they do so, the pond gently ripples as the wizened form of Belamros raises from it. The students are accustomed to his exotic entrances, but what they aren't used to is the enormous toad lurking under the water behind him.

Belamros steps onto the dry land with the **giant toad** floating twenty feet behind him. Looking at the students, Belamros gestures at the toad and says, "When I disappear, Mr. Toad here will wake up hungry and angry. If you live through the next few minutes, you'll have joined the ranks of the Harpers!" And with that, he pops out of existence.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

It has been six months since the students have arrived, and Adoward Axeager and Belamros Cruorin have woken their students up extra early this morning. Despite the early hour, and contagious yawns, there's a definite sense of excitement in the air.

Since Belamros's exit was quite sudden, the students find themselves ill-prepared for a fight. They may struggle to gain their feet and prepare their weapons. As they look around, they will notice that Adoward has vanished as well. Fortunately for them, it takes a few critical seconds for the toad to wake up and assess its situation. Unfortunately for them, the toad's assessment is that it's lunch time and he's got a tasty snack just standing around right in front of him.

GIANT TOAD

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Amphibious. The toad can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The toad's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the toad can't bite another target.

Swallow. The toad makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the toad dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

DM NOTE

The Giant Toad stats can be found on page 329 of the Monster Manual and are reproduced here for your convenience. This toad is truly enormous and should take up four squares on the map. While under water, the toad can move large distances and attack students adjacent to the water. It is also immune to some attacks and spells while submerged. The pond is over 30 feet deep which means the

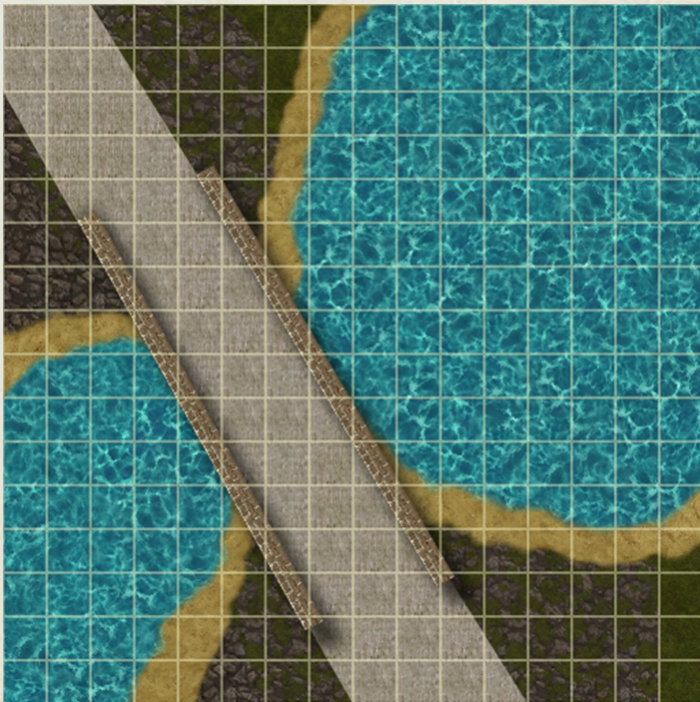
toad can dive deep enough to hide from the students and then make a leap out of the water to attack them. This makes the toad a challenging foe.

As the DM, you can place the players and toad wherever you'd like to start this encounter, but the toad should be at least 20 feet from the shore. You should describe the toad to the players, and let them make a Intelligence (Nature) check with a DC 10 to see how much the students know about **giant toads**.

The actual goal for the students is to survive at least 3 minutes with the toad. If they can figure out how to do this without harming it, then you can award them additional experience points. Harpers are good by nature and not inclined to kill animals unless they have to. However, the toad is bent on eating the students, so they might have to kill it if they can't figure out any alternatives.

After 3 minutes (30 turns), Belamros and Adoward will return. If the students are still conscious, they will graduate. Adoward will also heal injured students, and Belamros will subdue the toad if it is still fighting.

The map, shown below, depicts a single pond bisected by a bridge. The walls on either side of the bridge provide three-quarters cover for the characters and toad. The sand should be treated as rough terrain, while all other land terrain is normal. The pond is very deep (30 feet) and characters will have to swim if they are more than five feet from land.



MODULE RESOLUTION

If the students are successful, they are congratulated by Adoward and Belamros. Additionally, Belamros hands each student a small Harper pin that allows them to detect evil once per day. He shows them how to use them and tells them to be careful who they show them to as the Harpers have enemies. Now the characters are full Harpers, but very junior ones, and are awaiting their first Harper mission.

If the entire team was rendered unconscious, they lose the encounter and will have to repeat this trial. As the DM, you can move on to the next module and handle this through narration (i.e., tell them how they were able to vanquish the toad three weeks later), or you can have the characters go through the encounter once again. If you repeat the encounter, you can use a different beast, map, or starting location for the combatants to keep it from being repetitive. Either way, the players should be ready to move on to the next module in this campaign.

MODULE 2

Hama Said Knock
You Out



WHAT IF A CHARACTER DIES?

The premise of this module is that your party's characters are brand new adventurers who are recent graduates of a Harper training school located at a remote village. The students are now graduates of the school and the standard rules of death described in the PHB are in force. However, as the DM, you may want to make attack and damage rolls in secret. This way, you can prevent your entire party being killed by a single high roll of the dice. While your players are still new to the game, and low level, you may want to fudge some of your dice rolls to ensure that the party is having fun.

MILESTONE

Upon completing this module, each character will arrive at the Harper guild hall in Berdusk where they will be inducted by one of the High Harpers. Following the induction, they will be introduced to masters of their respective crafts and given the chance to apprentice under them. By this point, each character should be level three and should select an archetype, tradition, or oath depending on their Class. Players who have already selected this for their character (e.g., Clerics and Druids) are allowed to change it under the tutelage of their selected master.

BACKSTORY

After passing their final barrier to entry into the Harper ranks, the students finally understand why Adoward Axeager is called "the Baker" by the locals. On their last day at the school, the students rise to the warm, yeasty smell of bread permeating their small dormitory. As they enter the kitchen, they survey the panoply of baked goods arrayed before them, many of which are steadily making their way down Belamros Cruorin's gullet.

The Harpers, being a semi-secret organization, don't actually keep birth names in their records, but use pseudonyms for their secret agents. While working in the field, they identify themselves to other Harpers using their nom de guerre and flashing their Harper pin. Two days later, the young Harpers find themselves trekking cross-country, heading towards Berdusk, when they top a slight ridge and see a small hamlet in the distance. It's quite bucolic, and all of the houses are well-kept. In fact, the hamlet is noticeably wealthier than settlements of this size tend to be.

Covered in a fine layer of flour, Adoward addresses his former students as they sit around the brobdingnagian table that dominates the kitchen. "Stuff your faces, then stuff your packs! In less than hour, you need to be heading south out of town. You all have a very important date in Berdusk."

Belamros daintily brushes crumbs from his moustache, which is odd since the better half of a loaf of bread has been indiscriminately spread across his beard and cemented with honey. Following up on Adoward's gruff pronouncement, Belamros says "In two weeks, the High Harper will be in Berdusk in order to officially record you in the Harper records. Since it's only a seven day hike from here, take your time and enjoy this brief break."

"But remember these two things: the High Harper doesn't wait for the likes of you, and you better have your Harper name prepared for this occasion."

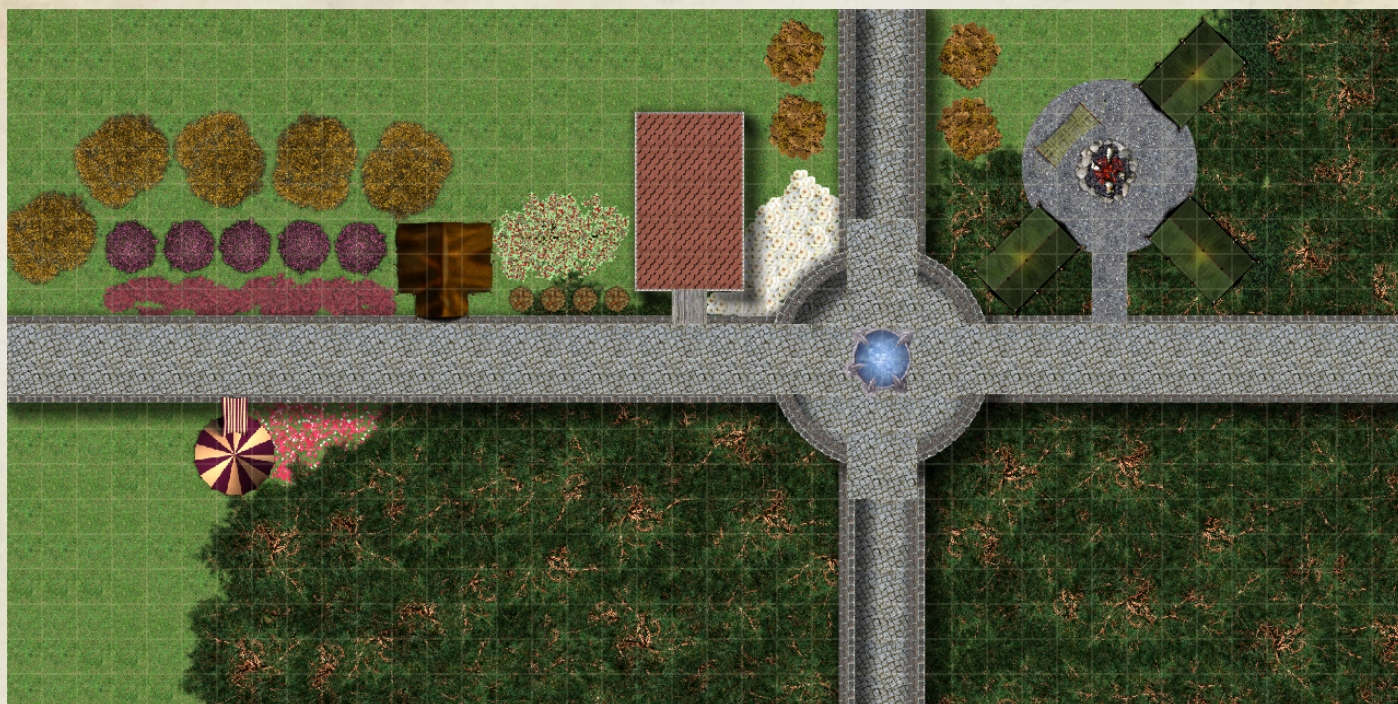
DM NOTE

As the party enters the hamlet, they will be able to interact with various Non-Player Characters (NPCs) which could lead to some interesting role-playing. In the next section you will find a map of the hamlet, a short list of the NPCs that live there, and some details about how the NPCs are likely to interact with the players. The encounters, listed below, do not have to happen sequentially, although that's the most likely order. Encounters happen when the characters make certain choices (e.g., follow the cultist or search for the crazy hermit) or move into certain areas. It will be up to you to determine when an encounter takes place.

THE HAMLET OF NONCEVEUX

The hamlet of Nonceveux lies somewhere between a permanent campground and a small village. The large, rectangular mercantile is easily the biggest building within a day's hike and carries a wide variety of necessities. A few feet to the west is the mercantile's only competitor in the area. The small shop is run by Quarion Ilphelkiir. To the dismay of the locals, Quarion runs a brisk black market business in addition to his meager repair services.

Although Nonceveux is still very small, many rich families pass through it on their way to family estates and summer homes. The area abounds with rich hunting lodges and the hamlet trades in luxury items. The resident humans and gnomes see Nonceveux as a promising market with long-term growth potential and are eager to take advantage of the wealthy families that flow past their well.



The Hamlet of Nonceveux

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- Ella “Badger” Diergel:** A female human. She owns the hamlet’s mercantile shop. She is old as death and as tenacious as her nickname would suggest. She has a wide array of basic items available for sale, but at a 10% markup. Hagglng her down is difficult with a successful DC 20 Persuasion (Charisma) check and there’s a good chance she will sell customers more items than they really need. Aside from making a sale, she’s very private and will not reveal any of the town’s business to outsiders.
- Quarion Iphelkiir:** A male human. He repairs most items and is a general handyman and dealmaker. In his back room he tends to have some exotic goods for sale. At the moment he has *Dust of Disappearance* for sale for a mere 25 gold pieces. This dust should turn all creatures within 10 feet invisible. However, what Quarion is trying to pass off as the real thing is actually *Dust of Sneezing and Choking*. An *Identify* spell can reveal the true nature of the small bag of powder and a successful DC 15 Perception (Widsom) check indicates that Quarion may not be as forthcoming about the powder as he has let on. If the powder is used, all creatures within 30 feet have to succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or start sneezing so violently that they cannot breathe. For more information, see pages 166 and 167 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* (DMG) for both types of dust. While talking to the players, Quarion may comment about an abandoned homestead that is one day’s walk west of the hamlet and that he thinks some violent fanatics have taken up residence there. He suggests that they stay away from that area as nothing good happens that far out of town anyway.
- Imzel Uuthrakt:** A male gnome. He lives and works in the striped tent on the south side of the road that bifurcates the hamlet from east to west. He makes his living hauling goods to some of the estates in the surrounding forest. The wealthy homeowners hire him to keep their summer homes stocked so they can continually entertain their rich guests. Due to the nature of his work, he is very familiar with the surrounding areas and the homeowners. If questioned about odd goings-on, Imzel may mention that some of the rich kids have gone inexplicably missing. He finds it peculiar that the authorities have not been alerted about this. He also mentions the same abandoned homestead that Quarion mentions. For a nominal fee of 5 gold pieces, he is willing to give the young Harpers a ride to any local destinations. This would cut the usual travel time in half.
- Zook “Fnipper” Folkor:** A male gnome. He is a circumspect lumberjack who lives in the semi-permanent campsite set up in the northeast corner of town. He is very sensitive about his height and occupation and has started more than one fight over either topic. Since even his muscles have muscles, people tend to stay on his good side. However, staying on his good side is easier said than done given his volatile temper. But he responds well to flattery and positive persuasion. Threats and intimidation will result in him not speaking to anybody or, possibly, outright attacking them (use **commoner** stats). If he is persuaded to talk he mentions a small, but nice, hunting lodge two days west of the hamlet that would be an excellent hideout. If he does attempt to fight it is just to chase people off or knock them out...never to permanently injure or kill. (See Encounter 3 for more on the hunting lodge).

- **Kethra Agosto:** A female human. She is passing through town and is shopping for goods in the mercantile. She is young and hard-looking with a well-used hilt readily apparent at her hip. Her demeanor is pleasant enough but she will reveal little more about herself than her name. If questioned she will turn the conversation in other directions and deflect attention from herself. Kethra is actually a bounty hunter and is new to her job. She is on her way back to Berdusk to report on activities of a cult nearby. She has been spying on them for some time but has not found a way to collect her bounty yet. Once she returns with reinforcements she believes she will be able to take on the cult leader and collect the 500 gold piece bounty that has been placed upon his head. When asked about rumors or news, Kethra talks about coming across an abandoned house west of town. She smelled what she believed to be sickeningly sweet smell of cooking human flesh—"not unlike that of chicken," she recounts—and heard terrible noises coming from within the house that she will not describe further. She says she does not believe in the rumors of a cannibal corpse roaming around the outskirts of town. Anyone who is even remotely paying attention to Kethra's recounting will notice that as she says she does not believe the rumors her freehand idly goes to the hilt of her sword (DC 5 Perception (Wisdom)).
- **Hama Jassan:** An elderly female human. She lives in the campsite setup in the northeast corner of Nonceveux and she works for Imzel Uuthrakt. She finds specialty items requested by the rich and powerful residents summering in the area and passes them to Imzel for delivery to their final destination. Today she happens to be watering her donkey at the well while she unpacks some of her more expensive goods. If asked about cultish activity she tears up and tells the party about her son, Roey Jassan, joining a cult but that she is hopeful he will come to his senses and return home soon.

DM NOTE

When the characters get close to Hama Jassan, start Encounter 1 as described below. If the characters help after her attack and return her stolen box, Hama will mention that she heard about a feral kid who has purportedly turned cannibalistic and lives in an abandoned homestead a day's walk west of town. If she isn't helped she will complain bitterly about the crime in her beloved Nonceveux and she will not provide any useful information.

ENCOUNTER 1—BACK THAT JACKASS UP

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 2 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: NONE

MODULE AWARDS: NONE

EXPERIENCE: 150 XP EACH

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

As the travelers approach the well they see Hama Jassan taking a large package off of her overburdened jackass. While struggling to keep her balance and place the package on the ground Hama does not notice a slightly deranged human approaching her beast of burden. The adventurers look on in complete surprise as the disheveled human bursts into a mad dash, punches the poor donkey, and absconds with a small but valuable-looking box.

DM NOTE

If the characters go after the fleeing human then follow the rest of the encounter as described below. If they do not follow him and later decide to leave Nonceveux by heading south then they will be ambushed by a cult leader and his assistant and you will need to follow this encounter.

If the young Harpers pursue the thief Hama yells, "Be careful! He's just a boy and a knock on the head should set him straight!" Leaving the hamlet to the south, the Harpers see the young thief standing near a pier that juts out into the river. He looks over his shoulder and, upon seeing the armed party chasing him, looks around as if he is frightened for his life.

DM NOTE

The thief, a human named Droeg Nalk, will attempt to lure the characters close to the pier (see the map). Once their backs are to the woods, a cult fanatic will jump out of the woods and attempt to surprise the characters. The thief (who is also a cultist) and the fanatic (a human name Erothy Quar, will attempt to subdue the party and take their valuables. They do not want to hurt the party if they can avoid it.

If the party is getting the best of the cultists, then the cultists will attempt to flee. If possible, the cultists will take the valuable box with them. If they cannot, they will abandon the box to get away.



CULTIST

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

If the party is able to recover the box they will find that it is a finely-crafted wooden box full of expensive tobacco. This box is worth 20 gold pieces if they try to sell it. If they return the box to Hama Jassan she will reveal more information about the rumored cannibal living outside of town. Her information is detailed enough for the party to find the abandoned homestead and should lead to Encounter 2 (below) if they decide to investigate the rumors.

Killing the young cultist/thief, Droeg Nalk, will dismay Hama and she will be infuriated with the party. As it turns out, Droeg is a local kid who has helped her run errands in the past and she believed he is going through an “awkward adolescence” but did not deserve to die. She suspected he was becoming involved with the cult, but she was hopeful she could keep him away from that dark path. The death of Droeg will require the party to spend an extra day searching for the abandoned homestead as Hama will be so overcome with grief and anger that she will not be able to divulge any information to the party.

If, however, the party does not kill Droeg and return him safely to town, reward the party with 15 additional XP each. Hama will be overjoyed at Droeg’s return and, unless they steal her box, she will be very forthcoming and helpful to the group. If Droeg is returned and the box is not she will regard the party with mixed feelings and her dealings with them will be unpredictable.

CULT FANATIC

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

Actions

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

ENCOUNTER 2—FINE YOUNG CANNIBAL

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 2 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: NONE

MODULE AWARDS: NONE

EXPERIENCE: 100 XP EACH IF THEY SAVE ROEY JASSAN.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

As the party approaches the abandoned homestead the wind is blowing from west to east and a strange mixture of scents wafts over them: a wood fire, burned chicken, and the unmistakable stench of unwashed human. Remembering the rumors of the feral cannibal said to be living here, the young Harpers are a bit unnerved.

DM NOTE

This is a good spot to allow the players to scout their surroundings and make some plans before approaching the homestead. The party members have several actions they can take. A few of them are listed here:

- Sneak up on the homestead, DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)
- Observe the homestead and the filthy human living there
- DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check shows a well-used living area, a fire pit, and several human skulls and bones that look to have been cooked prior to the flesh being removed...unceremoniously
- DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check shows the gnawed remains of a chicken can be seen near the fire pit
- DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check shows the human is actually a young adult
- DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals the human bones appear old and the homestead looks like it burned down years ago. This suggests that the human probably is not a cannibal after all.
- Approach the human and attempt to interact with him
- DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check calms the person down enough to talk and reveals his name to be Roey Jassan. This is Hama Jassan's son!
- DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check convinces Roey to take a break from the cult
- DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check makes Roey cower and prevent him from attacking the group, but he will not talk at all. He will only follow direct orders. A failed intimidation check results in Roey attacking the party or fleeing (50% chance of either happening).
- DC 5 Charisma (Deception) check is easy because Roey is timorous and unable to focus. If he finds out he has been lied to he will not trust the party ever again
- DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check to clean Roey up and perform some minor aid. Doing this will build trust between him and the party. Doing so will make Persuasion much easier (DC 10 instead of DC 15)

- Attack him and attempt to subdue him. This will require a successful grappling attack and he will fight back as hard as he can. This could result in injuring him

Approaching Roey is risky since he is half-crazed and feral at the moment. He will be very aggressive at first but will back down from an actual attack. He is all bluster, but will go wild if physically threatened or attacked. For his stats, use the cultist information previously provided.

ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

If the Harpers are able to calm Roey down and talk to him they will learn that he had fallen in with the Undenominational Reformed Church of the Anointed Blue Oyster. The members detest being called "cultists" and view themselves as ardent defenders of their faith. Roey, however, saw the dark underbelly of the reformed church. Certainly the money and fine goods kept flowing in which appeased countless members. But children would disappear without explanation or, worse, inquiry.

Roey recounts a night when he snuck into the house and saw a flying demon that had been summoned. When he cracked open the door he could see a pentagram drawn on the floor with nine candles on each of the ten intersections of the pentagram except the northernmost point. At this tenth intersection a cowed figure stood holding another candle reverently and chanting something in a quiet but harsh tongue. Roey recognized neither the figure nor the language. When a flying demon materialized within the pentagram Roey lost his resolve and fled. He has been hiding out here ever since.

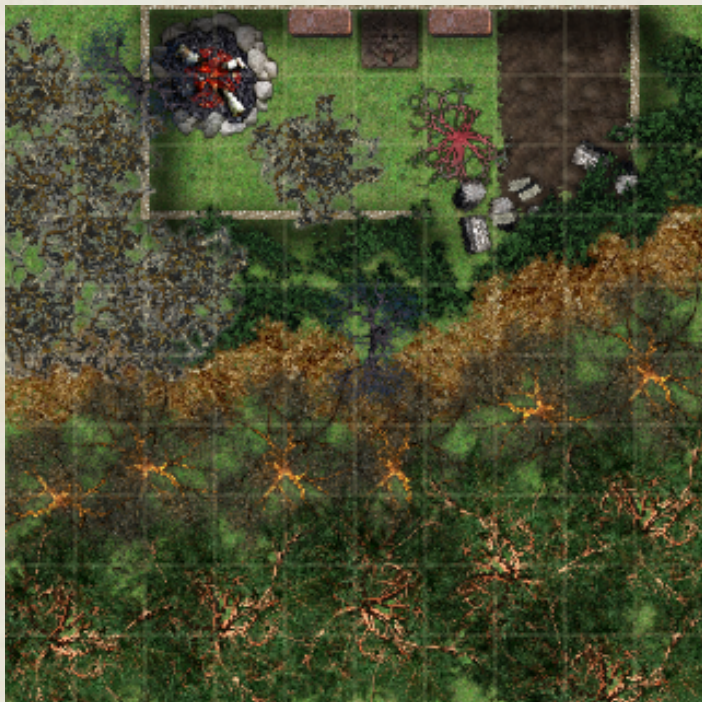
Due to Roey's current state of mind the party may have a tough time knowing how much is fact and how much is panic-induced prattle. One thing is certain, however. There is at least a small element of truth to his story which warrants further investigation.

DM NOTE

The party can eventually get the full story from Roey and even directions to the cult headquarters. They will have to calm him down and coax the information out of him to get this information. They would be able to convince him to head home if he is calmed. This means the party will not need to waste time escorting him back to Nonceveux. If they do calm him and convince him to head home, he will make it without any trouble.

If the party is not able to handle the encounter peacefully, they will have to spend a full day searching for the trail to the cult headquarters. That is if they wish to seek it at all. If they subdued Roey, they will have to leave him tied up at the homestead or take him back to Hama themselves. If they try to take him back to the cult, he will fight to the point of exhaustion and it will double the time it takes to find the headquarters.

Remember, the Harpers are on a schedule to get to Berdusk! But they should be encouraged to resolve the cult issue as a priority. Ideally, they should resolve this and make it to Berdusk in time but, as Harpers, it is their calling to help the powerless.



Roey's Hideout

ENCOUNTER 3—THE CULT OF THE BLUE OYSTER

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: 2 (4 CHARACTERS)

TREASURE: 400 GOLD PIECES (HIDDEN IN THE EVIL PRIEST'S OFFICE)

MODULE AWARDS: NONE

EXPERIENCE: 350 XP EACH

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTION

As the party approaches the abandoned homestead the wind is blowing from west to east and a strange mixture of scents wafts over them: a wood fire, burned chicken, and the unmistakable stench of unwashed human. Remembering the rumors of the feral cannibal said to be living here, the young Harpers are a bit unnerved.

DM NOTE

A small overgrown trail leads the party westward. After a hard day of hiking the group crests a small hill that looks down upon a clearing in the forest. Situated on the far side of the clearing is a hunting lodge. Although it is small by the standards of the wealthy nobles in the area, it appears to be

well kept. Oddly, there is a large group of children running around the clearing.

Upon closer inspection, the kids appear to be unsupervised and a large buffet table has been set up near the entrance to the lodge. It is dinnertime and children of all ages are flocking to the table to grab food. It seems to be a jubilant environment with sounds of laughter ringing out all over the clearing.

While the children are eating and playing, an older man in a brown robe emerges from the lodge. He quickly counts the children and checks on the food before ducking back into the lodge. Sunset is approaching and some of the older children are setting out torches and building a large campfire. It appears that the revelry will not slow down anytime soon.



DM NOTE

The stone room shown on the map is actually a hidden underground room and cannot be seen from the outside. The trees are growing on top of this area and characters can move around these trees with ease. To find the entrance to the hidden room, they will need to succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to reveal a secret door behind the desk located in the office. The door is not locked, but the latch must be found in order for it to be opened.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It is now dusk and you see the robed man reemerge from the lodge and the children settle in before him with an obedience that most parents can only dream of. Once they are settled and silent, which only takes moments, you hear him give the following melodic benediction: Useful Information
It is now dusk and you see the robed man reemerge from the lodge and the children settle in before him with an obedience that most parents can only dream of. Once they are settled and silent, which only takes moments, you hear him give the following melodic benediction:

"All our times have come
Here, but now they're gone
Seasons, don't fear the reaper
Nor do the wind, the sun or the rain"

As soon as he is finished the children all sign themselves somatically and the robed man motions to the food. The children all enthusiastically, but orderly, get their food and the feast continues.

DM NOTE

If this man is approached by the Harpers he explains that he runs a small camp that caters to wealthy parents who just need a few weeks away from their children. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check (DC 10 if the party has already spoken to any of the children and learned of their fears) reveals that he is lying and obviously nervous about their questioning. If he gets the impression that the party is not buying his story—or that they will stick around and make trouble—he will attempt to convince the Harpers to follow him back to his office where they can discuss their questions in privacy. He will let them enter his office and he will lock the door as he follows them in. While the adventurers are looking around he will attack them while they're distracted.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Giles Nynson:** A male human. He is easily fifty years old and it shows in his gray hair. His brown robe is made of fine cloth and is closely tailored across his chest, giving the indication that he is quite well-muscled for a man his age. Giles is clearly in charge of the children and they seem to not only respect him but to also like him.
- **Mara Brythuie:** A 12-year old female human. She has a pronounced lisp but is upbeat and happy. She will gladly chat with anybody, especially the interesting Harpers. Although she asks many questions she only talks about her new friends and their gossip and reveals nothing useful.
- **Dulfa Lesum:** A 9-year old male human. He is very shy but can be coaxed out of his shell (DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check). He is new to the group and is not sure why he is here. He was supposed to spend the summer at his grandma's house but wound up at this strange lodge instead. He gets notes from his parents and sends notes back as well. Giles Nynson makes sure he sends his parents a short letter each week and Giles usually includes a message at the bottom that Dulfa cannot read.

- **Findanye Tanerwe:** A 13-year old female gnome. Typically reaching adulthood somewhere around their 40th year the party will note that Findanye, as well as the other gnomes here, are extremely young compared to their human counterparts of similar years. Findanye has dark blue hair that she has pulled into a ponytail that juts out from the side of her head. Her large smile can barely hide her furtive glances and her eyes appear to be tightened just a bit, as though in constant fear and apprehension. A perceptive person (successful DC 12 Perception (Wisdom) check) will notice that she appears to be frightened and is doing her best to keep it hidden. If persuaded (successful DC 8 Persuasion (Charisma) check), Findanye explains that she has been living at the lodge for a long time. In fact she has been here longer than just about anyone else. Over that time she has witnessed a few of the children being led away by Giles, never to be seen or heard of again. She has also figured out that the notes the kids send home include a demand from Giles and that a constant stream of messengers delivers fine goods on a regular basis. She does not know the details, but she suspects that Giles is using the kids to extort money from their families.
- **Amanis Tanerwe:** A 10-year old female gnome. She is obviously Findanye's sister as evidenced by her dark blue hair. In contrast to her sister's, Amanis's hair is wild and unkempt, much like Amanis herself. Findanye hides her fear from her sister well and Amanis is completely unaware. Most of Amanis's chatter is about her new friends, but she does mention that Rewalt Barne keeps pulling her hair and teasing her. She says she is happy he got caught sneaking around the house and the stern lecture he got from Giles for it. Apparently Rewalt is the local bully and he really dislikes Amanis because she stands up to him.
- **Rewalt Barne:** A 15-year old male gnome. He is the oldest kid, in years, at the lodge. He is small due to his gnomish heritage but he also has a mean streak not commonly found in gnomes. The only way to get through to him is to intimidate him (successful DC 10 Intimidation (Charisma) check). Doing so will reveal that he was caught sneaking around the house and that he had intended to pull a prank on Amanis. However, as he walked by Giles's office, he peaked through the door and was frightened to see Giles wearing a black robe instead of his customary brown one. He was chanting in a peculiar language and lighting candles while he did so. As Rewalt backed away from the sinister scene, he knocked over a table which resulted in his getting caught. He will not speak of the punishment he endured but is adamant that he was in the wrong by snooping.

INSIDE THE LODGE

If Giles persuaded the party to follow him into his office then skip this section. The final encounter is a surprise attack between Giles and the party. Assuming the players wait until everybody is asleep they can sneak into the lodge undetected (successful DC 8 Stealth (Dexterity) check). Otherwise, they encounter Giles, but he doesn't have the element of surprise.

The young Harpers quietly sneak into the lodge and can just barely make out their surroundings by the glow of the fire. Three of the rooms do not have doors and a quick look inside each reveals that all of the kids are sleeping soundly. The fourth room, on the other hand, is protected by a locked door. As they approach this locked door they notice something peculiar. Any noise made near the door does not appear to travel beyond a five foot radius. This is a sure sign that something sinister could be happening behind that locked door!

DM NOTE

The door can be unlocked with a successful DC 13 Thieves' Tools Dexterity) check. It can be broken down (AC 15, HP 12). Or the party can spend 10 minutes prying the door open. For every 5 minutes spent at the door there is a 25% chance that Giles will open it unexpectedly. Roll 1d20, a result of 1-5 means Giles opens the door and surprises the party.

Inside the locked room is Giles's office. A desk cluttered with paper sits against the back wall next to a small chest with a lock on it. The rest of the room is very tidy and the clutter on the desk looks out of place.

Sounds made inside the room do not travel more than five feet past the door and walls. This means that Giles, who is currently in the hidden basement, does not hear the party entering his room. It also means the party will not hear him come through the secret door. For every 5 minutes they spend in the room there is a 40% chance (1-8 on 1d20) that Giles will open the secret door unexpectedly. He will have the element of surprise and will immediately attack the party.

A search of the desk reveals a hidden drawer with a key to the chest (successful DC 8 Investigation (Intelligence) check). The lock on the chest is high quality and picking it requires a successful DC 16 Thieves' Tools (Dexterity) check. The lock can be broken (AC 14, HP 10) or the party can spend 15 minutes prying the chest apart. The chest contains 400 gold pieces.

If the characters spend time reading the papers they notice that only a few of them are in Gnomish or Common. The rest are written in Infernal and would not be recognized by most people. The papers that they can read paint a sordid picture of Giles's affairs and prove that he has kidnapped the kids living with him and countless others that are no longer here. He uses them to extort money from their rich parents which explains why there is so much gold in the chest.

Looking around the room the characters may notice that there are marks on the wall behind the desk (successful DC 10 Perception (Wisdom) check). Once they notice this, it is easy to figure out that moving one of the barrels next to the desk makes it possible to slide the desk to one side. Once the desk is moved it reveals a small entryway leading down a dark set of stairs.

GILES NYN SON, PRIEST

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (Chain Shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +5

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Gnomish, Infernal

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

Actions

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

I GOTTA FRIEND WITH A HOLE IN THE BASEMENT

Once the party moves into the stairway behind the desk it becomes apparent that whoever made this room was not a skilled mason and the steps are uneven. As the party moves down the stairs a gust of sulfurous air hits them in the face, making their eyes water. It is almost like a blast of air from Hell itself is coming at them.

Moving to the edge of the stairs and looking around the corner the party beholds a sinister sight. Giles, dressed in an expensive-looking chain shirt, stands on the edge of a pentalpha with candles burning at each of the intersections, just as Roey had described. Within the center, surrounded by candles, is the source of the hellish air. Standing with his back to the stairs Giles is locked into a battle of wills with a flying fiend.

DM NOTE

If the party interrupts Giles while he is summoning the fiend the party will gain the advantage of surprise. There is also a chance that the summoning will be completed correctly. If the party waits too long, Giles will finish summoning the fiend and take control of it. If the summoning is interrupted, roll 1d20. A result of 1-5 means the fiend is not summoned and fades away. A 6-10 results in the fiend attacking Giles and then the party. On a result of 11-15 the demon is stunned for 3 rounds and then attacks the closest person to it. And finally, a result of 16-20 means Giles was nonetheless successful in the summoning and immediately takes control of the demon and uses it to attack the party.

SPINED DEVIL

Small fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances Cold; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Silvered

Damage Immunities Fire, Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Infernal, Telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

Flyby. The devil doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Multiattack. The devil makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its fork or two with its tail spines.

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Tail Spine. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/80 ft., one target. **Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

If the party defeats Giles, the spined devil will continue to attack for two more rounds as it slowly fades out of existence. With Giles gone, there is nothing holding it to this plane of existence.

If the Harpers are unable to defeat Giles, they can flee up the stairs and barricade the secret door with the desk and other furniture in the room. This will prevent Giles and the devil from being able to leave the basement for twelve hours which should be plenty of time for the party to flee with all the children.

In their encounter with Giles the Harpers noticed a symbol on his chest that looks like a rapier blade stuck in a cube of ice. An astute observer would remember (DC 8 History (Intelligence) check) that this is the symbol of Levistus, the lord of the fifth level of Hell.

MODULE RESOLUTION

Two days later the party leads a weary pack of children into Nonceveux to the complete astonishment of the residents. Ella Diergel and Hama Jassan volunteer to take care of the children until their parents can be notified. This will take up all the spare rooms in town but the locals are more than willing to offer up the space. Ella is so excited about the return of the children that she offers a 20% discount on all her wares to the adventurers. The next morning the Harpers wake up early to at last resume their trip to Berdusk.

DM NOTE

The party had 14 days to make the hike to Berdusk. Normally it is a 7-day trek so if the party took more than 6 days to deal with the cult and other encounters involving Nonceveux then they will be late for their meeting. If this is the case, Adoward will reprimand them and enter them into the official Harper record himself. They will not get the chance to meet the High Harper but they will be congratulated for their honorable work involving the children nonetheless.

Read or paraphrase the following once the adventurer's arrive in Berdusk:

Adoward is waiting on the outskirts of town for you and he greets you with a knee-buckling slap on the back. As you make your way to Harpers' Hall, you find Adoward in on your adventure. He is clearly happy that you helped the children escape the cult. You can tell he is quite concerned about the symbol on Giles's chest.

Despite his growing concerns Adoward gets you settled in to shared sleeping quarters within Harpers' Hall. As he is about to leave he turns around and says, "I almost forgot! Each of you needs to tell me your new Harper name so we can properly introduce you to the High Harper tomorrow."

The following morning is a whirlwind of activity followed by a surprisingly brief induction ceremony. The ceremony is followed by a startlingly large feast and by midafternoon you are free from all duties and stuffed to the gills with rich foods and pleasant drinks. As you are congregating in one of the spare rooms and discussing the possibility of exploring more of Berdusk, Adoward pokes his head into the room and says, "Training is never over! Grab your gear and meet me in the lobby in fifteen minutes."

In the lobby the party is introduced to four Harpers they have never seen before. Adoward informs the party that these four Harpers will provide advanced training specific to their chosen professions. Just three more months of grueling apprenticeship and they will be ready for a real adventure!

DM NOTE

Use the following NPCs as trainers for the Harpers. Give each NPC the same class as one of your players and tell them that this trainer will provide advanced lessons unique to their classes.

- **Shyden Quekala:** A female Tiefling with a slight limp and missing the last 1/3 of her tail
- **Cator Ardtiao:** A male Halfling with a topknot and bushy eyebrows
- **Vorhata Zedel:** A male Half-Orc with no visible weapons that is exceptionally dandy even by Human standards
- **Kalad Kalul:** A female Human with a small scar at the corner of her mouth that gives her a very slight lisp when she talks

At this point each character should be level three and should select an archetype, tradition, or oath depending on whatever their class is. Players who had already chosen this prior to this module (e.g., Clerics and/or Druids) are allowed to change it under the tutelage of their new masters.

Module 3

Heaven is a Place
on Faerûn



INTRODUCTION

This module is designed to take level three characters approximately halfway to level four and introduce the players to traps, investigations, and problem solving. If the players meet the objectives of the module, they will gain renown within the Harpers and increase their rank to *Watcher*.

PROLOGUE

DM NOTE

You may skip the prologue if you are just now beginning the Truly Madly Deeply adventure campaign. Using an adventure hook of your own, you will need to get your players to the east gate in Berdusk where they can meet up with their guide, Wolf. It is advisable that the PCs still be Harpers or, minimally, of a good alignment.

After spending three months in Berdusk, the new Harpers still feel like they are strangers living in an unfamiliar town. And for good reason. The last three months have been physically grueling, mentally exhausting, and painful in a thousand little (and not so little) ways. Having finished their apprenticeship and parting ways with their mentors the night before, the new recruits decided to sleep in. Gradually, they trickle into the lobby of Harper's Hall to discuss how they are going to use their two weeks of freedom, the reward that has been dangling in front of them ever since they started their apprenticeship.

The young Harpers are huddled over a crudely drawn map of Berdusk, energetically discussing which sites they'll visit first once they hit the town. They are so engrossed in the map and their excitement that they don't notice the shadow that falls over the map.

A booming voice startles you out of your planning, "If this mangy lot is what the next generation of Harpers looks like, we're all doomed! Not a respectable beard in sight..." Adoward Axeager steps forward and grabs each of you in a bearhug. If it weren't for the smile on the dwarf's face you each feel like this could have been the beginning of an unwinnable wrestling match for you all.

Before you can say anything, Adoward makes his way to the map and grins down at it with a look of unmistakable nostalgia. His grin shrinks just a bit as he looks at the rough depiction of Berdusk and, dragging his fingers through his beard, he says, "You lot have spent enough time lounging about and frittering away the last three months. It's time to earn your pay!"

You each suppress a groan. You recall some of the more senior Harpers lamenting how the typical pay of a Harper job is about enough to buy a hot cup of coffee from a seedy street vendor so long as you subsidized it with a copper from your own coin purse.

Adoward motions for you all to sit at the table with him and drops a large and travel-worn map on top of the table, obscuring the streets and alleys of Berdusk as he unrolls it. He stabs a finger at a spot on the southern edge of the Sunset Mountains directly east of Berdusk.

"There's a little mining town here called Heaven. Apparently, even miners aren't immune to the allure of irony. The town is dirty, nasty, and full of miscreants trying to get rich by striking a silver vein in the mountains. As bad a place as Heaven is, it's gotten worse lately. Travelers and townsfolk alike have gone missing. Something strange is happening there and the Harpers are charged with investigations and, if necessary, resolution."

Encourage the players to hold a conversation with Adoward. Some of the information he could reveal is:

- The party will need a guide to find their way to Heaven. It is off the beaten path and roads don't run directly to it.
- It will take two weeks of travel to get to Heaven. They should bring all the supplies they need with them as they are going to an isolated settlement.
- Residents of Heaven have complained of swarming locusts. The insects have caused damage, chased people away, and even hurt livestock. After the swarm passed, they have noticed valuables missing.
- Travelers have reported being attacked by giant scorpions, centipedes, spiders, and even a wasp. Attacked travelers have been the predominant source of reported missing items. Upon returning to the attack site after fleeing the insects, they found many valuables lost.

Once the players have finished gathering information from Adoward read the following:

"Remember, I'll meet you in Heaven in three weeks. You lot may not look like Harpers, but I'm sure you'll act like ones in Heaven. Don't make me regret having brought you into the fold! When you get to Vale Gate, look for a lad who calls himself Wolf—I suppose there are worse names to go by—anyway, I've conscripted him to lead you to Heaven. He's a good boy and a fine guide." With that, Adoward ushers you out of the Hall and gives a solemn nod before slamming the door. It looks like your two-week break will be anything but relaxing.

PART ONE

The Harpers can find supplies before they leave. Berdusk is a large enough city that any standard items in the PHB can be easily found. Once they are ready to leave they should make their way to Vale Gate to meet up with Wolf. Once they approach the gate read or paraphrase the following to them:

As you close the distance between yourselves and Vale Gate you see a lanky human lying on his back gnawing on what's left of a turkey leg. He is a bit older than yourselves and is possibly the hairiest human you've ever seen. A bit of turkey meat has gotten stuck in his beard. You immediately think this must be Wolf. Adoward probably chose him as your escort for his beard alone!

Have the players make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a successful check the player(s) will notice the human is discreetly flashing a small symbol of a harp. If no one succeeds on this check, they can also try a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover the harp symbol. This is indeed Wolf.

Upon realizing you are the Harpers he was hired to escort, he stands up and tosses away the bone he'd been gnawing. He wipes his hands on his wool jacket and says, "all right then, you must be the greenhorns the dwarf told me about, huh? Well, I can see why he needed Wolf's services. No offense, you see, but you just don't look like the types to know the goat trails up off the Uldoon Trail is all. Your friend did right by you to hire me. Speaking of which, which one of youse has the coin? Axeager tells me it's worth 100 gold for me to see that you get to Heaven in haste."

DM NOTE

You may want to adjust the payment based on how much gold the party has. They should feel the pressure to save some money but not so much to forego paying Wolf altogether. A speedy trip is in their best interest. Wolf can be talked down by 15% of his asking fee with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the party tries to intimidate Wolf into a lower fee it will require a DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check. On a success he will begrudgingly offer a 5% discount as a final offer and tells them if they don't accept that they can go back to Adoward for a new guide. Regardless of what the PCs choose, it is clear that "conscripted" may have been a poor choice of words from Adoward. Wolf has not been paid.

HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF

Despite his youth, Wolf proves himself to be a confident guide. Unless the Harpers used intimidation to negotiate a lower fee, Wolf hits it off almost immediately with them. He maintains a steady conversation with his new companions, but his eyes are constantly flicking from point to point, always wary of danger.

Three days into their cross-country trek, the Harpers are slowly overtaken by a herd of cattle and a single outrider. The outrider is a halfling farmhand working for a large family that is taking their cattle herd to Proskur where they will summer near the Lake of Dragons. The halfling introduces himself as Marton Heathertoe.

As the Harpers continue traveling, they meet the rest of the family for whom Marton works. The Thamdreys are also halflings and the Harpers immediately hit it off with them as well. Particularly the family matriarch, Yoalyn Thamdreya. With their spirits lifted, the groups decide to travel together for as long as they can. Not only is there safety in numbers, but the Thamdreys' offer to let the Harpers ride their cattle was too appealing to pass up.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Yoalyn Thamdreya**—Thamdreya matriarch who is showing signs of dementia. However, she is still mostly capable. For now, she is lucid oftentimes and her confused moments come infrequently and unexpectedly. She carries an old battered journal and reads from it nightly after assisting with building the campfire and cooking stew. She also carries alchemist's tools in her pack.
- **Elielle and Iraster Thamdreya**—Mother and father, respectively, of the halfling family. They are leading their herd of miniature belted Galloway cattle to the Lake of Dragons. Iraster is Yoalyn's grandson. She and her husband raised him after his parents died when he was only a small child.
- **Fentina, Brevira, Elivra, and Thermita**—Thamdreya children, ages 12, 10, 9, and 5, respectively. Iraster dotes on his little girls while Elielle does her best to raise independent and strong-willed ladies.
- **Marton Heathertoe and Linzin Quettory**—male halfling farmhands employed by the Thamdreys to escort them and their cattle.



DM NOTE

What no one realizes is that Yoalyn's journal is a Tome of Witchcraft the details of which are beyond this adventure's scope. In her youth, she studied as a druid, but after the death of her husband a decade ago, she started studying more arcane magic.

Given her advanced age (145 years) and deteriorating mental state, she is of little use as a combatant. But she still may have a few tricks up her sleeve.

Nonetheless, it is a bad idea to let her journal fall into the PCs' hands at their current levels because of how powerful it is.

On a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, the characters notice that Wolf has become even more twitchy than usual. He gets along well with the Thamdreys and their farmhands but appears to be distracted and is constantly eyeing the cattle.

The Harpers will travel with the family for four nights before their paths diverge and they must part ways. Each night, something spooks the cattle and makes the guards very nervous. In the morning, the Harpers overhear the farmhands talking about this.

Each morning the Harpers will be able to perform Charisma (Persuasion), Wisdom (Perception), and Intelligence (Nature) checks to figure out what is going on. Succeeding on a check gives the party one clue. They can gain a maximum of nine clues over the next three mornings. The more clues they gain, the easier it will be for them to figure out what is happening by making a successful Wisdom (Insight) check at the end of the third morning. If the players ask good questions or take steps to discover the truth, reduce the DC for each check by 2. This encourages role-playing to gather information rather than just rolling dice.

The chart below provides the DC for each check by morning.

CLUE DC CHECKS

Check	Morning 1	Morning 2	Morning 3
Charisma (Persuasion)	15	13	11
Wisdom (Perception)	15	13	11
Intelligence (Nature)	15	13	11

MORNING 1

As the Harpers wake up and go through their morning ablutions read or paraphrase the following:

You hear laughter around the campfire and Marton appears to be the butt of a joke. He's gesticulating at the woods and seems uncharacteristically serious. This only leads to more laughter from the Thamdreys and even from Linzin. Finally exasperated, Marton storms past you muttering, "I don't care what those numbskulls say. I know what

I seent!" He sulks over his breakfast alone by his bedroll.

The clues the team can gain are below, but they must first succeed on the appropriate checks in the table above:

Charisma (Persuasion):

Marton was on guard duty when he saw red glowing eyes in the night. They appeared to be slinking around the cattle and as he went to investigate they disappeared into the night. No one believes him and thinks he's just road-weary. One thing is certain and that is that Marton is adamant he was not seeing things that weren't there.

He is reluctant to speak about it because of everyone's reactions to his account, but he will come out with these details upon a successful check.

Wisdom (Perception): Wolf appears overtired and preoccupied with his thoughts. He idly plays with his bowl of porridge that Elivra offered him, but after a few moments he slyly dumps out the porridge and cleans the bowl. He rummages through his pack and pulls out a large hunk of jerky. He gnaws on it thoughtfully.

Intelligence (Nature): Scouting around the perimeter of the camp reveals paw prints near a small puddle. They appear to be from a small coyote or fox.

The rest of the day passes without incident.

MORNING 2

Yoalyn is late for breakfast despite being known as an early riser. In fact, the children usually joke that she rises so early that she needs a nap before it's even time to milk the cows. Read or paraphrase the following:

An outburst from Marton like the one the morning before is generating more side-splitting laughter from the Thamdreys and has awakened Yoalyn from her slumber. As she rubs sleep from her eyes she hears Marton exhorting, "I'm telling you I seent those eyes again! This time they was following me around when I was checking the perimeter!" As he stomps away, Yoalyn motions for him to come closer to her and they confer quietly and briefly. Both walk away from one another with furrowed brows.

Charisma (Persuasion):

Once again, on Marton's watch, he saw the same red eyes as the night before. But this time he was careful to observe them before moving closer. Over the course of an hour he saw the eyes creep up to the edge of the cattle herd. They were knee-high but suddenly lurched up to the full height of a human. He heard a brief sniffing noise before the eyes disappeared.

Towards the end of his shift, he heard a snarl followed by a small yip come from the far side of the herd. Upon investigation, he found the smallest cow looking around frantically.

Wisdom (Perception): Yoalyn appears to have had a sleepless night and mentions her fitful sleep and how she awoke in cold sweat. She thumbs through her journal during breakfast and, if asked for further details, says the last time she felt this way was several decades ago when she was in the presence of something evil. Or cursed. Or maybe it was both. She's unsure of the details.

She will not allow anyone to look for additional information in her journal. If anyone tries to forcefully remove the book from her, then Iraster, Marton, and Linzin will intervene on her behalf, using nonviolent means. If the Harpers escalate to violence, then the three halflings will defend themselves, but their main goal will be to get away from the Harpers.

Intelligence (Nature): A successful check reveals more tracks like the ones found the morning prior (if they were discovered then). This time the tracks alternate from sets of two, three, and four tracks, as if a four-legged animal injured a paw or even two and was forced to hobble and hop along. The tracks are from a single animal.

The rest of this day passes without incident. Only dusty trails and hushed murmurs of whether something is haunting the camp or if Marton is going crazy.

MORNING 3

A commotion from the edge of the camp wakes the Harpers just before daybreak. They can see Iraster, Marton, and Linzin huddled around one of the miniature calves. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach, you notice the small cow is thrashing about. Eyes wide with terror, it is struggling against the three men who are inspecting wounds on its hindquarters. Yoalyn offers a salve to Iraster who applies it to several bites. He notices you watching and jumps to his feet before shouting.

"Luckily these bites are shallow, and she'll make a full recovery. She's more afraid than she is hurt. What on Toril happened to her?! We were fine until we joined up with your lot. What's following you?! If you haven't been honest with us and have put my family in danger, I'll kill you all!"

The players should defuse the tension as quickly as possible. Iraster is fearful for his family as well as his small herd. After all, the former's livelihood much depends on the latter's well-being. If they cannot placate him with a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) then Iraster will name the Harpers his enemies and swears to give their description to the first constable he encounters before packing up and parting ways.

DM NOTE

The Harpers should remember Adoward's words about not regretting recruiting them into the faction.

Charisma (Persuasion):

Linzin woke up to the sounds of yipping and a distressed cow. If the check is successful read or paraphrase the following:

"So, there I was sleepin'—an' enjoyin' it too!—then I heard the cow thrashin' an' all. So, I goes to look what Marton's done this time. Oh, but what I seent wa'n't Marton at all! This man was tall like a human...well, he looked more like a wolf. Or a dog. For sure a lanky dog walkin' like a man. He bit that cow, but I think she got a good kick in. By the time I was close enough do somethin' that creature'd done run off. That's when I shouted for Iraster and Marton to come help. I don' know what you'ns brought with you but I wish you wouldn'ta done it. These cows' milk will start drying up for sure at this rate!"

Wisdom (Perception): Each member of the Thamdrey family and Linzin and Marton both are now wearing a small and crude talisman made of long grass wrapped around their forearms. They also have a smudge of charcoal on their foreheads that looks a bit like a smudged eye. If asked, they will explain that Yoalyn has been busying herself creating wards against evil and she is fixated on Wolf even though he has slept through the commotion.

DM NOTE

It's unclear if she is somewhat delirious and fixated on Wolf because of his name and shaggy hair and beard, or if she is being reasonable. Either way, she believes he is somehow to blame.

Intelligence (Nature): The bite marks on the calf are consistent with that of a wolf, albeit a small one. Whatever bit this cow was tall enough to reach its hindquarters which would rule out the halflings or anything their size. There is also a trail of blood leading away from the attack site. The trail goes cold after a couple of hundred feet.

By now, the players are likely suspecting Wolf too. To see if their characters can deduce what is going on, use the clues they may have gathered over the last three days using the Variable DC table below to make a Wisdom (Insight) check.

Clues	Difficulty
0	DC18
1-3	DC15
4-6	DC10
7-9	DC8

If the players succeed on the check then read or paraphrase the following:

In a flash of inspiration, all the past days' events suddenly add up to one conclusion: Wolf just may be a werewolf! He's been groggy in the mornings. He's had no appetite for warm-cooked meals, preferring his jerky. One morning he was suffering a nosebleed which is common enough in some people with allergies. But allergies rarely cause black eyes.

What will you do?

A LITTLE BAIT NEVER HURT ANYONE

At this point, the players have several options. They could confront Wolf immediately, they could talk to Yoalyn and question her knowledge for suggestions regarding evil and curses, they could devise a plan of their own, or they could ignore the problem. Regardless of their decision, Yoalyn has been creating a plan to handle Wolf herself.

Yoalyn plans to lure Wolf into their camp on the third night, and as luck would have it, they stumbled upon an abandoned settlement that looks like a great spot to setup camp.



AREA 1

Marton will sleep in this hut.

AREA 2

The Harpers and Wolf are assigned to sleep in this hut. This will be under the pretense of semi-ostracization if the Harpers are in on the plan. Otherwise, it should be made clear that they are not trusted by the Thamdreys; Yoalyn has said as much and told everyone to lock their doors or otherwise barricade themselves in for protection.

AREA 3

This will be for the injured cow. There is only one door for this hut on the south side of the structure.

AREA 4

The Thamdreys will all share this shack.

AREA 5

Linzin will sleep here.

ENCOUNTER RESOLUTION

Option 1

If the party agreed to Yoalyn's plan to trap the creature that has been following them, they will be roused two hours after midnight by shouts from Linzin and Marton. Marton stands between hut 1 and hut 3, blocking any escape attempts that way. Linzin will do the same for the space between huts 3 and 5 while Iraster will stand guard between huts 1 and 4. Elielle will stay near the door of hut 4 and protect her children and Yoalyn. The Harpers are charged with protecting the space between hut 4 and 5.

Once the team has assembled, read or paraphrase the following:

As you fall into your assigned positions you see a small, bedraggled dog slinking its way to the hut with cow in it. The animal scans the darkness while sniffing the air to assess the people arrayed all around the camp. It puts his tail between his legs and cautiously advances towards Linzin. Linzin, unsure of what to do, instinctively takes a cautious step back while locking eyes with the animal. He immediately slumps over in a deep sleep.

Players should make a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check to see if they can identify the creature. Those who fail the check will recognize this animal as a jackal and will be confused about what's come over Linzin. Those who succeed will know immediately that things have just gone from bad to worse. This is no ordinary jackal. This is a **jackalwere** and Linzin has just succumbed to its sleep gaze. He will be of no use during this fight. Everyone should roll for initiative.

Tactics

Use the **Commoner** stats (*Monster Manual*, p. 345) for Iraster, Marton, and Elielle.

If the **jackalwere** escapes into the night, it is never seen again by the Harpers or Thamdreys family. They also find Wolf missing in the morning, and they realize that their friend must have been cursed all along. Although the Harpers receive no rewards, they also don't suffer any major setbacks other than taking 2 additional days to reach their destination.

If the **jackalwere** is killed, the body reverts to its original form and the players realize that their friend, Wolf, was under a curse. If this is the outcome, the Harpers could lose renown and it takes them 3 additional days to reach their destination as they spend one day burying and mourning their friend.

If the **jackalwere** is captured alive, see the resolution for Option 2 below.

JACKALWERE

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 18(4d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +4, Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that are not Silvered

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common (can't speak in jackal form)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Shapechanger. The jackalwere can use its action to polymorph into a specific Medium human or a jackal-humanoid hybrid, or back into its true form (that of a Small jackal). Other than its size, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The jackalwere has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics The jackalwere has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the jackalwere's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite (Jackal or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Scimitar (Human or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Sleep Gaze. The jackalwere gazes at one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target succumbs to a magical slumber, falling unconscious for 10 minutes or until someone uses an action to shake the target awake. A creature that successfully saves against the effect is immune to this jackalwere's gaze for the next 24 hours. Undead and creatures immune to being charmed aren't affected by it.

If the players realize that their friend Wolf is causing the disturbances, they are likely to approach Yoalyn to discuss this. Being an experienced witch, Yoalyn realizes that they are dealing with a were creature, and it is likely that young Wolf is cursed. Rather than attacking Wolf, she proposes subduing him and performing a cleansing ritual to free him of the curse.

The Harpers will need to devise a plan for capturing Wolf safely and delivering him to Yoalyn either comatose or tied up.

DM NOTE

If the players went with Option 1 above and successfully captured Wolf, the following resolution could apply to them as well.

The Harpers deliver a bound and gagged Wolf to Yoalyn in the middle of the camp clearing. Yoalyn draws a large circle in the dirt around herself and Wolf. As the circle closes, the campfire flame turns an unnatural light blue, and an eerie silence descends. Yoalyn spends the next two hours drawing figures on the now unconscious body of Wolf, chanting the entire time, but not a sound can be heard. It seems that the sounds are confined to the circle that Yoalyn works within.

Eventually, Yoalyn completes her work and carefully steps outside the circle she has drawn. Looking around at her family, friends, and the Harpers, she says the following:

"I hope this works. When the morning sunlight shines on Wolf, it will either banish his curse or make it permanent and lock him in his alternate form." Shaking with fatigue, Yoalyn moves closer to the fire, and sits with it between her and the inert form of Wolf. Quietly, the entire camp waits another hour for dawn.

Eventually, the horizon brightens and the first rays of sunlight creep into the clearing and over Wolf's body. Yoalyn's magic does not disappoint. When Wolf's body is fully covered in light, the figures drawn over the body start to glow, and a web of magic covers the body. As the web stretches fully over the body, a startling transition happens, with painful slowness. Hair grows, bones shift, and the body of a boy transforms into that of a half-jackal, half-human.

Yoalyn smiles to herself, and you feel some relief that the magic is working. Once the body is fully into its hybrid form, a loud crack emanates from the magic circle. Nearly simultaneously, Yoalyn jumps up with an inarticulate shout. As you watch, the golden network of magic surrounding Wolf turns a sickly green, and the smell of burnt skin and fur wafts over you. Before you can react, the jackalwere lurches to its feet and makes a stumbling, panic-stricken dash for the woods.

Despite your best efforts, Wolf has escaped.

Parting with the Thamdreys is a sad affair and Linzin agrees to ride with them to Heaven since they lost their guide. Plus, she needs to spread the word that a were creature is on the prowl in the area.

Option 2

Yoalyn is especially dejected and blames herself. Her family, and the Harpers, console her with the fact that they all tried their best to help Wolf. In the end, they had all done right by Wolf, even if the outcome wasn't what they had hoped for.

As they part ways, Yoalyn offers to provide the group with something special that she has crafted for them. The family cannot reward the travelers with coin, but they can offer them enough farmer cheese (Yoalyn and Elielle made this nightly alongside the stew) and jerky to last for a couple of weeks so long as the cheese is kept out of excessive heat. Elielle will also teach anyone who is interested how to make the cheese.

DM NOTE

Yoalyn will use the Tome of Witchcraft to reward the group with an alchemy item if. Roll a d6 to determine what she gives the party.

ALCHEMY ITEM TABLE

D6 Result	Item
1	Dust of Disappearance
2	Oil of Slipperiness
3	Potion of Hill Giant Strength
4	Potion of Growth
5	Potion of Resistance
6	Philter of Love

In addition to the potion, the group will receive 150 XP each for attempting to help Wolf and cure him of his curse.

THIS ENDS PART ONE

PART TWO

The road- and heart-weary Harpers finally arrive at the small mining village ironically named Heaven by its inhabitants. Initially, the Harpers were excited to see the buildings as they crested a small rise outside of town, but this only lasted until the wind shifted direction and the stink of the town settled over them. Linzin leads them to the town hall and beats a hasty retreat after exchanging farewells.

Consisting of twenty more or less permanent structures, a river, and a handful of docks, the town is dirty, and serves only as a launching point for miners seeking gold in the Sunset Mountains. Heaven has a shack that serves as a pub, a small store that specializes in shovels, and a large building where miners can rent out a sleeping space before they head into the hills, or, far more likely, to recover after losing all their gear in the mountains before they head back home. There is also a small temple that operates as a satellite to a larger temple to Kiltzi located in Berdusk.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Mia Dwoodek**—Pub owner/operator of *Heaven & Ale*. She wears flamboyant clothing that she claims is customary in her homeland. She is a human in her mid-50s and has the look of someone who has lived a hedonistic but honest life. She is fond of all animals and has several ferrets as pets. Mia tends to be discursive, and frequently misuses words...not in an effort to sound smart, she is just a bit spacey. Mia keeps a pulse on the town and local environs and everyone in town knows it. If the Harpers ask around (DC10 Intelligence (Investigation) check), they will learn the location of the pub and that Mia seems to know everything going on in town and in the hills.

- **Ferrand Meknen**—Shovel merchant. He is a bald third-generation miner who was born in Heaven and plans to die there. He has an impressive beard that he absent-mindedly strokes. He sings to himself in a voice that suggests he was classically trained. If asked, he says he has had no formal training unless you consider the years he spent in the mines. He has since retired from the mines due to a lung condition and is an expert in all matters of excavation. Human male, early 40s with no children or spouse.
- **Tau Mostir**—A human male in his early 20s and he runs the inn, which primarily consists of renting rooms to travelers and miners. He has a peculiar birthmark under his right eye. The more superstitious miners say it is an omen and signals that he will one day find the largest vein of silver within the Sunset Mountains. However, Tau despises mining and refuses to take up the profession. In fact, he resents living in Heaven amongst the “bumpkins” and dreams of moving away to Waterdeep as soon as possible. He lives a frugal life and saves as much as he can to fulfill this dream. He speaks several languages including elvish, dwarvish, gnomish, and even a few goblinoid dialects. He has a nervous habit of pacing when he is irritated. Which is most of the time. He is well-meaning. Just unhappy in Heaven.
- **Duran Milo**—Human priest with distinctive tattoos that he designed himself. In fact, the art in his temple is all his own work, and he could easily make a comfortable living as an artisan in a larger city. The tattoos are an intricate design that form a mural of sorts to his goddess, Kiltzi. He is wise but a bit clumsy; when he paces (which is anytime he is in deep thought) he tends to knock things off tables or stumble over his own feet. He is curious by nature and will ask the travelers extensive questions about their travels and whether they know his brother, Duran Otis, who is on assignment in Hardbuckler. He confides in the group that he believes his brother was assigned that location due to his distaste for gnomes in general.

Duran is a vicar to the high priestess of Kiltzi in Berdusk. The high priestess deemed the assignment necessary given the dangers of the mining profession. Since little of value is being found in the mines the town itself is operating at a loss and the temple is subsidized by Berdusk (the temple in Berdusk) and by selling potions and restorative spells at 10% over normal cost to travelers. If there is a paladin or cleric in the group, the priest will sell these services at 105% of normal cost.

He believes that Heaven is doomed to fail since the mines do not produce much but he accepted this assignment for the greater good of the community's permanent residents and to better understand the “human” condition. In fact, his life goal is to seek knowledge to ease the suffering of those people in his congregation. What he does not readily tell anyone is that he is escaping a past that is shameful to him. To ordinary people, his tiny injustices in his life before priesthood are just that, tiny injustices that few, if any, remember.

- **Jotub Ghogur**—Human miner. Missing three fingers from his left hand (thumb and forefinger remain). He is smarter than his brother, Roet, and is the mastermind of their nefarious schemes. He is familiar with the thieves' cant and if he notices it being used, he will abandon the plans to mug the party and will disengage altogether, taking his brother with him. Otherwise, he is fidgety and hot-tempered. He is sensitive about his disability and is easily incited to violence (unless someone starts using the thieves' cant).
- **Roet Ghogur**—Younger brother to Jotub. He walks with labored steps (speed reduced to 20) due to a stooped back...likely a result of a rough childhood in the mines. He is foolish but a smooth talker. He will try to bilk the party out of as much coin as possible using the coaching he's received from his brother over the last several years. He will follow his brother's lead and despite his dim-wittedness, he readily notices Jotub's subtle clues of when to press a con and when to abandon it. His habit of squinting may make the PCs think he is being dishonest (DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check). He is not as quick-tempered as Jotub unless the party insults either brother or if the PCs catch on to the ruse.

Neither brother has any information about about what is troubling Heaven.

Talking With Duran Milo

The players could decide to go speak with Duran (it may be a good idea if they need healing). You, the DM, should set the prices for any services or potions he might sell to be slightly higher than what your players are used to paying. However, a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check would let the player bluff as a follower of Kiltzi to get slightly more favorable pricing. A failed check would lead to the vicar not trusting the group and only offering immediate aid, (no potions or scrolls would be sold for later use). If their bluffing is particularly bad, they could get a bad reputation around town as mistrustful.

DM NOTE

Once again, players should be mindful of Adoward's advice.

Talking With Ferrand Meknen

Ferrand is amiable enough but can only really confirm the rumors he has heard. He cannot provide speculation as to what may be troubling the town, and unless the party is in need of excavation equipment, he cannot offer them anything more. He does not treat the players as if they are bothering him and he will not keep chatting after they have decided to go elsewhere to seek information. He will simply go back to polishing his shovels and picks. They can hear him singing a beautiful lament to himself as they exit his shop and head off for additional information.

Talking With Tau Mostir

Tau is not very useful to the party unless they are looking for a place to stay. He will pine endlessly about leaving Heaven and offer the party rooms for the night at 1 silver piece each. He doesn't push a hard sell and if the players aren't interested in staying the night he will ask questions about the places the PCs have visited and beg them to

share the details of those places. He also asks about Wolf and whether he'll be back soon. He always had the best stories.

Talking With Mia Dwoodek

If the players decide to go talk to Mia (she is the best source of information in Heaven) she will freely tell them about a miner (whom she did not recognize) that was talking about a strange building he passed coming back to Heaven. She seems hesitant to discuss the rumors in more detail. However, the Harpers can use intimidation, investigation, or persuasion to get a general location of the dwelling two days' trek from Heaven.

DM NOTE

The players should describe how they are going to get the information out of Mia Dwoodek and then role-play it out. The DC is 15 for Intimidation, Investigation, or Persuasion. However, the players can reduce this check by devising a good plan, role-playing the situation well, or making a convincing argument to Mia Dwoodek. The goal is to encourage good role-playing and descriptive actions taken by the players.

Once the players are finished gathering information from Tau, Ferrand, and/or Mia read or paraphrase the following.

After leaving *Heaven & Ale*, you come across two humans who have clearly fallen on hard times. The taller one approaches you with a toothy grin and says, "Well, looky here, Roet. Seems this lot been spending a little time at the bousing ken. No doubt looking for mort before headin' off to the autem, eh?"

Jotub is using Thieves' Cant here. If a rogue is in the party, then he or she will notice it immediately and can converse with the two miners. This would discourage any further provocations. Otherwise, the party does not understand what he is saying and should assume the brothers are crazy, drunk, or both.

If no one can understand Thieves' Cant, then the brothers will try to fleece the party out of money with a hard-luck story about the mines drying up and having hungry kids at home to feed. They will react with violence if the party offends them or accuses them of panhandling.

If this encounter does escalate to violence use the **Commoner** stats (*Monster Manual*, p. 345) but reduce Roet's speed to 20.

Award an additional 100 XP if the players can defuse this situation without killing the brothers.

If the Harpers are not able to get directions to the dwelling that Mia Dwoodek hinted at after two days of searching, they will be approached by Mirabelle Laughingsteel. She is a 19-year-old female human bodyguard. She has short, wavy, red hair and brown eyes with rough brown skin. She stands taller than most human females at 5'11" and has an athletic build in keeping with her chosen profession. She has an edgy, typical face, and gestures profusely whenever she becomes deeply engaged in conversation.

Mirabelle has just arrived in Heaven and completed her current job. She is looking for new work and heard that the Harpers need a guide. For 100 gold, she will take the Harpers to the mystery building they have been hearing about, but she will not hang around to investigate said building. She is a bodyguard, but not suicidal. A DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check will get the Harpers a 10% discount on her services.

DM NOTE

If the players do not have the resources to pay the 100 gold, Mirabelle will take weapons, armor, or other gear that is valuable to a bodyguard. Other NPCs may be willing to pay the Harpers for manual labor or buy other items from them. Of course, adjust as necessary to advance the story.

THIS ENDS PART TWO

PART THREE

After a day and a half of slogging through the rain, the Harpers come across a small, well-traveled path. It winds through the light underbrush of the deciduous forest and wends its way further into the foothills and increasingly steep terrain. Plodding along, heads down to avoid the deluge of water cascading off branches far overhead, the Harpers round the last bend in the trail. Ahead of them is a small box canyon, with a large shed in the middle of a small clearing. It's underwhelming, to say the least.

DM NOTE

If Mirabelle Laughingsteel, or any other NPC, has led the players to this point, they will part ways before going down to the shed. They've heard rumors of this place and don't think it is worth any amount of gold to enter the building.

The trail up to the shed seems to be bigger, and more well-used, than the young adventurers expected. The forest and underbrush in this area is thick enough to limit visibility through the trees and makes it difficult to approach the hut from any direction but the path. Despite the rain and heavy underbrush, an unusual number of insect swarms plague the Harpers. What started out as a nuisance becomes nearly unbearable the closer they get to the shed.

DM NOTE

Although there are no guards, or anyone around the shed, a few checks are a good idea to keep the players on their toes and make them suspicious. A DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check enables the Harpers to sneak up on the shed without arousing any suspicion. Then again, failing it does the same (no one is in the shed)! However, a DC 13 Wisdom (Nature) check alerts them to something unusual about halfway down the trail. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a log trap attached to a tripwire. If the Harpers do not find this trap, the first player to walk over it will be hit by a log that swings down from the right side of the trail for 2d6 damage, or half as much if they make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If the players avoid this trap on the way in to the shed, they are even more likely to trip it on their way back out to Heaven. In that case, the DC for both Nature and Investigation checks is 15. Disabling requires success on a DC 12 Dexterity check.

The shed is well-kept, and clearly somebody maintains it and the surrounding area. However, as darkness falls, and the Harpers approach it, there are no visible occupants or sounds coming from it. It is made from sturdy logs, with only a single door that faces directly towards the trail. It is well-used, and the paint has worn off the door knob.



Other than the log trap on the path, there are no other traps, but the door is firmly locked. With a DC 15 Thieves' Tools (Dexterity) check, the Harpers can enter the building unannounced.

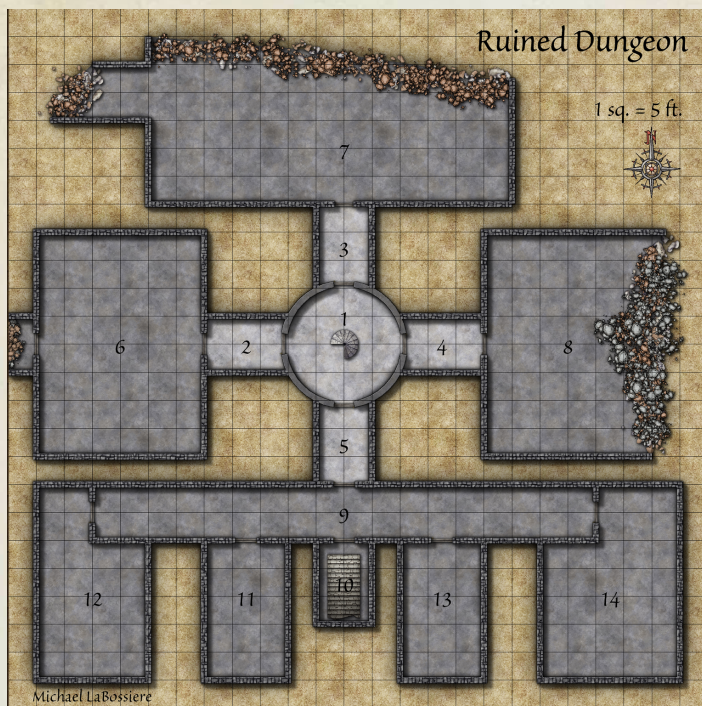
DM NOTE

If the Harpers can't pick the lock, they can break down the door, which will alert the inhabitants of the deeper within, ruining any chances of a surprise attack.

The Harpers can, with time and tools, remove the door from the hinges without breaking anything. They will need to succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check to do so. To determine the amount of time it will take to dismantle the door, make a DC 17 Strength check. For every point below the target, add 15 minutes to the time, with 15 minutes being the minimum time it will take. For example, a Strength check of 15 missed by two points, so the time to remove the door would be 30 minutes. A critical failure results in 1d6 bludgeoning damage to the player who rolled the check because their tool breaks and their hand slams in the door.

Inside, the shed is tidy and clean. The insects that were so persistent outside do not follow the Harpers inside. In fact, not a single insect makes it past the doorway, which is a huge relief. The constant buzzing, droning, and chittering was enough to drive anyone crazy. The silence inside the shed, not to mention the cessation of the creepy crawling feeling of bugs bouncing off their bodies, brings a collective sigh from the team.

There is a spiral stairwell in the middle of the shed, leading straight down. The outer wall of the well is made of river polished rocks, and the stairs are thick-cut wood. The entire stairwell is well-maintained and serviceable.



THE LAIR

Room 1

The stairs end in a circular room with four doors. They are identical, wooden, and painted a bright cerulean that is reminiscent of the summer sky. The walls of the round room consist of the same river rock used in the stairwell. A small table sits along the southeastern wall, cluttered with knick knacks. The southwest wall is lined with five coat hooks, each sporting a cloak. Below the cloaks, an assortment of shoes is carefully lined along the wall. The cloaks and shoes look like they belong to the same person. Several oil lamps keep the room brightly lit and give it a homey feeling.

On the small table, an intensely dark cloth is folded and placed neatly on the corner of the table near the stairs. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals this to be much more than a tablecloth. It is a *Portable Hole* (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, p. 185) that, when unfolded, is a rectangle 10 feet long and 5 feet wide.

A DC 8 Intelligence (Arcana) check reminds the Harpers that these holes create an extradimensional space 10 feet deep. This won't let them pass through walls or obstacles, but it could be used for a variety of purposes and is very valuable for an adventuring party. Maescia Biralei used her portable hole to transport large objects out to her fortress, and always takes it with her when she's out scouring the wilderness for new artifacts.

DM NOTE

It is up to you how much you reveal about the hole and how you go about it. If the players are curious, they could learn more about the hole by performing experiments on it. One thing they should discover, or remember, is that they can close the hole up simply by folding it. It is then as easily carried as if it were a standard tablecloth. However, any living

creatures inside the hole when it is closed can fight their way out. On a successful DC 10 Strength check, the creature forces its way out and appears within 5 feet of the portable hole or the creature carrying it. This causes a permanent rip in the hole, rendering it useless.

ROOMS 2, 3, AND 4

These hallways are short, unlit, and have a single door at the end. They are surprisingly clean and free of any cobwebs. The doors at either end of these hallways are not locked.

Room 5

This door is locked, but a successful DC 15 Thieves' Tools (Dexterity) check can unlock it quickly. Unlike the other hallways, this one is lit and two comically old suits of antiquated armor stand on either side of the door at the far end of the hall. As they open the door, the armor at the end of the room starts to move, shaking off a layer of dust.

DM NOTE

This door can also be taken off its hinges just like the door leading into the shed. However, doing so will alert Maescia Biralei, the owner of the residence, and she will automatically activate the Animated Armor located in the room. These constructs will attack as soon as the door is opened and will have a surprise attack on the Harpers. Players with a passive Perception of 8 or higher will hear the Animated Armor moving and can prepare for the attack. This negates the surprise attack for the Animated Armor and gives the players a chance to ready themselves for combat (i.e., change weapons, cast a spell, etc.).

If the players have found the portable hole in Room 1, laying it in the hallway creates a pit that the Animated Armor will fall into. Both sets of armor will charge blindly towards the players and easily fall into such a trap. If the players leave the portable hole on the floor, they can easily jump over it and continue their mission. If they take the hole with them, the armor can attempt to break out of it, destroying the hole, and leading to the party being attacked wherever they are. This could cause some serious trouble for the players.

ANIMATED ARMOR

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities Poison, Psychic

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 6

Languages --

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The armor is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by dispel magic, the armor must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the armor remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armor.

Actions

Multiattack. The armor makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

ROOM 6

Upon entering this room, the party is immediately hit with an intense smell of ammonia. The stench could cause them to wrretch and have watery eyes. Make a DC 13 Constitution save. A failed save means the player has disadvantage on all Perception, Investigation, and Stealth checks for 2d6 minutes.

This room appears to have once been a banquet hall. Several old tapestries hang from the walls. They are moth-eaten and of no value. There is a mated pair of **cockatrices** (*Monster Manual*, p. 42) and two obviously younger birds in the southwest corner of the room. One adult will stay within 5 feet of its nest and defend its egg but the other three are extremely aggressive and immediately attack the intruders. They will not pursue the group if the players flee.

If the party defeats the **cockatrices** and inspects this room they will note that the closet on the west wall—which was formerly a butler's pantry—is stocked with what look like alchemist's supplies and even nuts and preserved berries. A DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check reveals that these were being used to feed the birds but could also be used to supplement the players' own rations.

COCKATRICE

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw against being magically petrified. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified for 24 hours.

ROOM 7

This room is in terrible shape. The north wall and the northwest passage both collapsed some time ago. If the PCs try moving any of the rubble to explore further there is a 35% chance of an additional localized collapse. Any players within 10 feet of the disturbed debris must make a DC 16 Dexterity save or take 2d10 bludgeoning damage. No damage is taken on a successful save.

ROOM 8

This room was once clearly an entertainment hall for guests. There are remnants of a stage and broken instruments among the rubble.

Near the center of the room are several small to medium chests and the floor around them appears to be wet as though the ceiling has been leaking. If the party investigates the chests, they will find they are filled with stage props and moth-eaten costumes.

The wet floor is a **gray ooze** (*Monster Manual*, p. 243) which will pursue the party wherever it goes. It will use its amorphous qualities to slip under doors if it must. It only becomes aware of the party if they enter this room. It will use its Pseudopod action to wrap itself around a leg of a character and constrict, causing 1d6 + 1 bludgeoning damage plus 2d6 acid damage. However, this does not restrain the character, nor are they considered grappled.

GRAY OOZE

Medium ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	6 (-1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Resistances Acid, Cold, Fire

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrode Metal. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the ooze corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the ooze is destroyed after dealing damage. The ooze can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.

False Appearance. While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock.

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage, and if the target is wearing nonmagical metal armor, its armor is partly corroded and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Room 9

A long narrow hallway that is kept remarkably clean. Directly across from the entrance is an open door leading to a dimly lit stairwell. The other four doors in the hallway are closed. A rug runner spans the length of the hallway, and it appears to be well-worn. The faint smell of rotting wood and moldy carpet comes from the open door leading to the stairs.

DM NOTE

Upon entering this room, roll a 1d10 every 10 minutes of play time. On a roll of 1, Maescia Biralei leaves her room (#14) and goes to work in her workshop. On a roll of 2, she goes to her office (room #13). If she encounters the characters along the way, or otherwise becomes suspicious, she will immediately

run for her room and prepare for a fight. If the characters are hidden, they might recognize her pattern and set an ambush for her.

Room 10

Old, rickety stairs stretch up to the next level. The carpet on the stairs was plush at one time but is currently moldering away. Some of the steps appear to be broken or missing, but overall the stairs look traversable.

The stairs are older and more unstable than they look. Any attempt to climb them results on them falling on any characters in the room. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check alerts them to the fact that the stairs are very old and likely to collapse. The players can avoid the stairs completely, especially since they dead-end at the top. The room they were supposed to lead up to was never completed, but that isn't apparent from the ground. If they fail the check, the stairs will appear to be old, but sturdy. Any attempt to climb the stairs ends with them collapsing on the characters in the room. They take bludgeoning damage (1D6 + 2) if they fail a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, and half damage if they succeed.

Room 11

This is the bedroom for Orth Mav, the handyman, butler, cook and personal assistant. Orth is a human male in his early 70s. Use commoner stats but with a -2 to strength, dexterity, and charisma. His wisdom is a 12. Orth is not aggressive but will defend himself if physically provoked. It is unlikely that he could be goaded into attacking by words alone.

On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Orth will give the party details on this dungeon and the woman who controls it. Maescia Biralei found the ruined dungeon about 5 years ago and hired Orth to build the shack that now conceals its entry. Together they have worked to make improvements. She provides him with shelter and a small monthly pittance of 20 silver pieces. However, all his expenses are covered so he generally spends his earnings on entertainment (books, sideshow attractions when they come around, and the occasional dwarven ale).

But more importantly, Maescia provides him with good conversation when she is around. He is convinced she is not a bad person at her core. Nevertheless, she is very dangerous and over-confident. Her petulance sometimes leads her to do things he does not believe is within her true nature. However, he cautions the group to either leave this dungeon altogether or to take great care in confronting Maescia. If she finds them in her lair she will not take kindly to the intrusion. He is too feeble to accompany the adventurers but will leave the dungeon if they ask him to.

DM NOTE

If the adventurers attack Orth, they should lose renown within the Harpers (this would be discovered later once the Harpers did an official investigation). If they convince him to leave the dungeon (to await their return to Heaven, perhaps, then award each player 100 XP.

ROOM 12

Filled with clutter, benches, and tools, this is the workroom where Maescia Biralei examines items she has acquired, repairs them as needed, and prepares them for sale to a local fence.

An *Apparatus of Kwalish* is tucked away in one corner of the workshop and partially covered by rags. This is Maescia Biralei's most recent find and she's convinced she can fix it and sell it for enough gold to finish building her lair. It looks like a large barrel with legs, pincers, and eyes. The barrel has a hidden catch, which can be found with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Although this device looks to be in good shape, it is out of commission and it would take a highly skilled magic user and tinkerer to fix it.

There is a 25% chance that the party will find Maescia in this room at work if she hasn't been alerted to their arrival. If she is aware of them, she will meet them in her bedroom, where she is better prepared to fight them off. If she encounters the players in this room, and she starts to lose the fight, she will attempt to escape into the apparatus. After 10 hours, she will start to run out of air.

If Maescia escapes into the apparatus, she opens the forward and side window shutters so that she can watch the Harpers. If they do nothing, she makes herself cozy in the apparatus and goes to sleep after four or five hours. If nothing happens to wake her, she will run out of air and die peacefully in her sleep. The players should only get half of the XP for defeating her in this way, and all her equipment (including the staff) is locked in the apparatus where it will remain until a master magic user can fix it.

The players can try to lure, cajole, harass, annoy, and entice Maescia to leave the apparatus. She can hear them if they yell loudly and communication is hard. With the windows open, players can see into the space, so they could cast certain spells inside. If they do that, Maescia will retaliate with any spells still available to her, but she prefers to save her spells for when she escapes from the apparatus.

DM NOTE

One option to get Maescia out of Kwalish is to start a fire under it. This would take an hour to setup and the Apparatus would become hot to the touch. At this point, Maescia would surrender herself to the Harpers.

ROOM 13

An enormous desk dominates the back wall of a lavish office. Behind it stands a large, cushioned chair that doesn't quite fit under the desk. In front are two padded leather chairs that are low to the ground and reclined just a bit. The result is that whoever sits in these chairs is forced to look up at Maescia as she conducts her studies.

While the room is nicely furnished, it is obvious that it has been pieced together over the years with no two items, other than the leather chairs, quite matching. The bookshelves are of various shapes and sizes, a liquor cabinet near the door is at least 200 years older than everything else in the room, and carpets overlap each other creating a dense, soft floor.

A large map is draped over the desk. Upon closer examination, it is apparent that Maescia Biralei has been mapping out her exploits. Using colored inks, she has drawn boxes over several areas on the map. Some boxes are shaded in, and a variety of colors are used seeming at random. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the color and shading is Maescia's method for identifying her level of interest in a place: red if it is of great interest, blue if it is of minimal interest, and purple if it is in between. The cross-hatches over these areas indicate that she has already visited the location.

ROOM 14

This is Maescia's bedroom.

When the adventurers come to this door, they find it is locked. If anyone casts *Detect Magic* on the door, it will reveal an aura of abjuration magic on it.

The door is protected by *Arcane Lock* and can only be opened by Maescia herself or by Orth, if the party can convince him to open it for them. It can be broken down with a successful DC 20 Strength check or the lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. Alternatively, a *Knock* spell deactivates the *Arcane Lock* ward for 10 minutes.

SHOWDOWN WITH MAESCIA BIRALEI

Maescia Biralei is an elf hedge wizard. She was expelled from wizard training as an adolescent and was shamed by her family as a failure. Broken and dejected, she turned her back on her homeland and vowed vengeance. She is a natural talent, but a terrible student. Over the last decade, she has honed her rudimentary magic through trial and error. She has a pronounced scar from the left corner of her mouth to her ear. It looks to be from an acid burn, and it causes her to sometimes slur her speech. This has no effect on her spellcasting abilities but is often distracting to new acquaintances. Old acquaintances know better than to stare at it or mention it in any way. Those that do find themselves besieged by an army of insects.

When bored, Maescia plays an ocarina that she always carries. She does a passable rendition of "Lament of Innocence", but she's not anything to write home about. The keen observer will notice that the Lament is also one of the tunes favored by Ferrand. This does not imply they are in league with one another...just that they are both hopeless romantics.

She is suspicious to the point of paranoia and there is a high probability that she will think the Harpers are hired by her family to bring her back home. This flatters her, although she has no intentions of going home. At least not until she has perfected her plans of vengeance.



TACTICS

Maescia is essentially a glass canon and will not fight to the death if she can help it. If she is ever reduced to half her hit points, she will try to disengage to exit the room. She will subsequently dash to the Apparatus of Kwalish in room 12 and lock herself in. The Apparatus is impenetrable and Maescia could gain the benefits of a short rest while inside. She would also cast Mass Cure Wounds on herself once out of range of her attackers.

Otherwise, she will attack ruthlessly. She will try to spare the Harpers' lives and convince them to join her ambitions or she will let them escape and tell them to let it be a warning to other interlopers. If the Harpers do escape, Maescia will redouble her efforts of fortifying her dungeons with additional traps and guardians.

THIS ENDS PART THREE

MAESCIA BIRALEI

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 42 (10d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	1 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)

Skills Arcana +6, Insight +2

Saving Throws Intelligence +6, Wisdom +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elven

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Actions

Staff of Swarming Insects. This staff has 10 Charges and regains 1d6 + 4 expended Charges daily at dawn. If Maescia expends the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, a Swarm of Insects consumes and destroys the staff, then disperses.

Spells. While holding the staff, Maescia can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using her Spell Save DC: *Giant Insect* (4 charges) or *Insect Plague* (five charges).

Insect Cloud. While holding the staff, Maescia can use an action and expend one charge to cause a swarm of harmless flying insects to spread out in a 30-foot radius from you. The insects remain for 10 minutes, making the area heavily obscured for creatures other than you. The swarm moves with her, remaining centered on her. A wind of at least 10 miles per hour disperses the swarm and ends the effect.

Spells

Spell Save DC 14, Spell Attack Modifier +6

PREPARED SPELLS

Cantrips (at will) | *Firebolt*, *Mage Hand*, *Acid Splash*, *Prestidigitation*, *Eldritch Blast*

1st (4 slots) *Grease*, *Sleep*, *Thunderwave*, *Shield*

2nd (3 slots) *Invisibility*, *Hold Person*, *Mirror Image*

3rd (3 slots) *Fireball*, *Haste*, *Counterspell*

4th (3 slots) *Arcane Eye*, *Conjure Minor Elementals*, *Confusion*

5th (2 slots) *Geas*, *Mass Cure Wounds*

CONCLUSION

If the Harpers get the *Staff of Swarming Insects*, and try to cure Wolf, then their renown as benevolent Harpers will increase by 1. This will bring the players up to the rank of Watcher within the Harper organization. On the other hand, if they kill Wolf, then they overhear people talking about how sad it was that Wolf wasn't spared. The people are grateful for having an end to their insect problem, but very disappointed in the outcome for Wolf. They heard rumors that Harpers might have been involved in protecting their mining village, but they don't believe it because Harpers would have behaved better.

HARPER RANKS

Rank	Harper Title
1	Watcher
2	Harpshadow
3	Brightcandle
4	Wise Owl
5	High Harper

If the Harpers are not able to bring Maescia to justice and retrieve the Staff of Swarming Insects, they will have to return to town for supplies before going anywhere else. They will receive no additional XP or renown, even if they did help heal Wolf. The townsfolk are appreciative of their effort but are worried that Maescia will blame the townsfolk for the attack and exact her vengeance on them. They will let the Harpers resupply, but then promptly shuffle them out of town and on their way as they do not want to be associated with them anymore.

EPILOGUE

Once the Harpers have resolved things with Maescia and the Staff, they should head back to *Heaven & Ale* to check for news of Adoward. Before they can make it though, they hear a commotion coming from the temple side of the covered bridge. Once they rush towards the commotion read or paraphrase the following.

Your players may find this cliffhanger a bit unsatisfying. That's a good thing! The most important thing is if they had fun along the way and if their comfort level with role-playing and mechanics improved over time. If so, more adventure awaits them and we encourage you to explore this story more if you'd like. But we think it should become yours at this point. Perhaps together you can learn who has sent assassins to Heaven. Where has Adoward been taken and by whom (by someone with the means to train a **roc** potentially)? What is the nature of his hammer?

As you rush to the bridge you hear a battlecry and then the unmistakable sound of crunching bones. You approach the scene, with no regard to stealth, and see a shirtless Adoward standing over a dead female drow. He is clearly wounded and winded.

When he sees you he scolds you while stepping over the body towards you, "What in the name of Moradin have you lot stirred up?! Why the blazes are assassins milling around a nothing-town like Heaven?"

Suddenly his eyes go wide with fear and he shouts for you to get down. Without thinking, you drop prone. Just as you do, you see a **roc** swoop down and grab Adoward and immediately soar off with him. In the frenzy, Adoward drops his hammer. You watch helplessly as the **roc** carries him away to the north.

Clearly, your lives as Harpers will leave little time for leisure.

